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THE SECONDHAND CLOTHING TRADE: ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND ETHICAL ISSUES

by

Kay Kathan McFadyen

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree

of Master of Science

in

Clothing and Textiles

Department of Human Ecology

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring, 1996

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled THE SECONDHAND CLOTHING TRADE: ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, AND ETHICAL ISSUES submitted by Kay Kathan McFadyen in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Clothing and Textiles.

Linda Capjack

Linda Capjack, Supervisor

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Dr. E. Crown, Co-Supervisor

Dr. P. Larson, Committee Member

Date: December 15, 1995

In Memory of My Dad,

KENNETH KATHAN KREYE

who passed away
during the early weeks
of this program,
but whose memory
is bound in this work
of his namesake.

Also dedicated to Gerry
who encouraged me,
and to Melanie & Krista
who coached me.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to develop a profile of secondhand clothing organizations which included acquisition and discard practices, and to examine economic, environmental, and ethical issues relating to those practices. A human ecological model was used as a framework for the study. Data was collected through questionnaires which were personally delivered to 63 secondhand clothing organizations in the Edmonton area, of which 79% were returned.

Thirty of fifty organizations identified themselves as profit-motivated, with the remainder describing a variety of socially-oriented objectives. More than half of inventories are obtained through consignments, with the balance coming from donations, local purchases, or foreign imports. While much unwanted clothing is discarded through returns to consignors, other methods include donations to other organizations, sales to other organizations, reprocessing, exporting, redistribution to related outlets or to staff, and directing to landfills.

As well as being an economically costly method, discarding to landfills represents an environmental concern in that landfills pollute air, water, and soil supplies. Edmonton area respondents, however, discard nearly 6% of unwanted secondhand clothing this way. The international trade in used clothing is another discard method in which many respondents participate, either directly or through intermediary organizations, which presents economic, environmental, and ethical issues. The study concluded that greater awareness of clothing discard options may promote the creative, economical, and socially-supportive potential of secondhand clothing as well as reduce environmental costs and promote human well-being in the global community.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Secondhand clothing traditionally has been associated with charity recipients and low-income purchasers. British historical records suggest that the secondhand clothing trade has provided an essential service in that country since the 1550s. Charity organizations in North America have actively solicited and marketed used clothing for over a century, and since the 1950s secondhand clothing has been linked to American subculture groups who wear it to express unique lifestyle philosophies.

Popular literature suggests there is a renewed interest in secondhand clothing. Fashion designers delight in the aesthetic virtues of 'vintage' attire; marketing researchers attempt to characterize target markets; consumer behaviorists hypothesize about changing attitudes toward secondhand clothing; entrepreneurs are transforming waste clothing into marketable products; environmentalists consider recycling textiles as a way to conserve production resources and reduce landfill waste; economists discuss exports of secondhand clothing and its effect on the balance of trade; and social activists describe the implications of used clothing exports on unstable textile industries in third world economies.

Much of the research relating to secondhand clothing has focused on the consumption process (Hammerstrom, 1985; Richardson, 1981). Other researchers have investigated household discard habits relating to used clothing (Butler, 1994; Butler & Francis, 1993; Fratzke, 1976; Hall, 1975; Shim, 1995; VeVerka, 1974).

Secondhand clothing, however, affects not only individual consumers and

households, but also suppliers and intermediaries involved in marketing the product, both locally and internationally. As well as providing employment to a great number of people for several hundred years (Ginsberg, 1980; Lemire, 1988, 1991; McKinley, 1986; Tozer & Levitt, 1983), secondhand clothing has influenced cultures and economies throughout the world through local markets, reprocessing industries and export trade. Secondhand clothing is a phenomenon which has influenced the global marketplace in many significant ways.

The current proliferation of used clothing outlets indicates secondhand clothing has gained a new respectability. Traditional thrift stores coexist with a new, high-end, type of secondhand venue, the 'vintage' or 'antique' clothing shop. Secondhand clothing dealers range from charity to commercial operators, from independent proprietors to international chains, from informal collectors to complex conglomerates, from profit-motivated business entities to philanthropic organizations, and from illegal traffickers to international importers and exporters. Despite differences among secondhand clothing organizations, all are involved in the process of acquiring used clothing from a variety of sources, distributing it through multiple channels, and discarding excess or unwanted inventories. These basic secondhand clothing trade activities present economic, environmental, and ethical issues with significant implications.

Statement of the Problem

The increasing number and variety of secondhand clothing organizations is one indicator of the diversity of organizational goals within the secondhand clothing trade. While this diversity influences specific policies and practices within the various organizations, the clothing acquisition and disposal practices which are common to all must reflect economic, environmental, and ethical

considerations which are both long-term and global in nature.

Business practices relating to secondhand clothing acquisition and discard are complex issues. The reuse or recycling of clothing discards is viewed as a positive alternative to excessive production, consumption, and waste. Recycled clothing provides economical alternatives for satisfying basic human needs; it conserves resources needed for new textile production; and it reduces textile waste destined for rapidly-filling landfill sites. Secondhand clothing also provides an important resource for textile reprocessing industries which manufacture such items as wiperags, insulation, paper, and upholstery stuffing. Finally, secondhand clothing is a popular and profitable export commodity which supports the North American balance of trade.

The trade in secondhand clothing and textiles, however, also raises important issues. Recycling secondhand clothing through exports to third world economies, while reducing our landfill, aiding western trade deficits, and providing inexpensive clothing to economically deprived nations, has been criticized for negatively influencing importers' economies through unfair marketing competition. It is also said to promote third world unemployment by causing closures within local textile industries and creating long-term dependence on western aid. The purpose of this descriptive study was to investigate economic, environmental, and ethical issues relating to the secondhand clothing trade by developing a profile of the various types of secondhand clothing organizations and by examining their policies and practices relating to the acquisition of secondhand clothing and the discard of unwanted inventories.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. develop a profile of secondhand clothing organizations, including
   a. characteristics of organizations, both charity and commercial;
   b. policies and practices relating to acquisition and discard of secondhand clothing;
2. identify and discuss environmental and ethical implications of acquisition and discard practices of secondhand clothing organizations;
3. examine possible differences between commercial operators and charity organizations regarding policies and practices relating to secondhand clothing acquisition and discard;
4. identify market opportunities for surplus or unwanted secondhand clothing inventories.

Justification for the Study

The ultimate goal of research in human ecology is to maximize human satisfaction and well-being through increased knowledge and understanding of people's interaction with their environment (Bubolz & Sontag, 1988; Kilsdonk, 1983). Touliatos & Compton (1988) suggested that problems for human ecology research include the improvement of conditions contributing to people's psychological and social development, improvement of conditions contributing to people's physiological health and development, improvement of physical components of people's environment, improvement of consumer competence and family resource use, and improvement of quality and availability of community services.

The trade in secondhand clothing influences human well-being in many

ways. Environmental implications of the acquisition and discard practices of secondhand clothing organizations are directly related to the physical, psychological, and social components of human surroundings. Similarly, the ethical implications of recycling secondhand clothing relate to the psychological and social aspects of the human environment.

In accordance with the goal of improving human well-being, this study explored the significant effects of the secondhand clothing trade on local and global communities. Environmentally and ethically responsible marketing options for unwanted inventories of secondhand clothing were examined. An understanding of the types of organizations involved in the secondhand clothing trade and their policies and practices will assist individual consumers and business organizations in making informed decisions regarding the recycling of used clothing. Links between marketing, environmental, government, and educational organizations which share an interest in the secondhand clothing trade will be encouraged. The study will provide information for training and development for current and prospective operators of secondhand clothing organizations. It will also increase awareness among educators, human ecologists, and consumers about the creative, economical, socially-supportive, and environmentally-conscious potential of secondhand clothing.

Definitions

The following terms are defined as they are used in this study.

1. **Charity organization** refers to an agency engaged in acquiring and distributing used clothing for altruistic or socially-motivated purposes which may include, but are not primarily or exclusively intended for, profit generation (Harrell & McConocha, 1992).

2. **Clothing consumption** is the process of acquiring, using or retaining, and discarding items of apparel, and includes financial expenditures for and use of clothing and related services (Winakor, 1969).

3. **Commercial organization** refers to an agency engaged in acquiring and distributing used clothing for economic intent including financial gain or business growth (Harrell & McConocha, 1992).

4. **Consignment organization** is an agency which accepts used clothing in trust for distribution or sale, with proceeds split between the original owner (consignor) and the receiving organization (consignee).

5. **Discard,** used interchangeably with the terms 'disposal' or 'disposition' , indicates removal from household or secondhand outlet inventory through handing down, throwing away, selling, exchanging, reprocessing, or abandoning (Winakor, 1969).

6. **Recycled clothing** may assume one of several forms. It may be that which is reused in the same capacity for which it was originally manufactured (e.g. vintage attire); it may be reprocessed to produce the same raw materials used in the initial manufacture (e.g. wool textile to wool fiber); or it may be reprocessed to produce a completely different kind of material (e.g. textile shredding for upholstery stuffing) (Quimby, 1975).

7. **Secondhand clothing acquisition** includes those activities directed toward obtaining used clothing from a variety of sources through purchases, donations, consignments, or other exchange procedures.

8. **Secondhand clothing organization** refers to any agency, regardless of structure, size, goal or objective, or philosophy, which acquires used clothing for the purpose of distributing it for the same or other uses.

9. **Secondhand clothing trade** relates to the exchange activities which follow the acquisition/useage/discard phases of originally-owned clothing in which the clothing enters a new cycle of reuse and the consumer is viewed not as the end point but as a pivot point in the new cycle (Harrell & McConocha, 1992; Winakor, 1969).

10. **Trade area** is that geographic area delineated by wholesale trade boundaries based on such services as radio stations, daily newspapers, cultural facilities, hospitals, and specialized stores, and often includes more than one community (Warren, 1965).

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The development of a profile of secondhand clothing organizations and an analysis of their marketing practices requires a general understanding of trends in clothing consumption as well as a comprehensive knowledge of secondhand clothing operations. It requires an informed appreciation of a variety of secondhand clothing organizations--their goals and objectives, their structure, and their modes of operation, including marketing strategies relating to inventory acquisition and discard practices.

This review of literature provides insights into the historical significance and continued growth of the secondhand clothing trade. It identifies marketing practices of contemporary secondhand clothing organizations including acquisition and discard strategies, and addresses economic, environmental, and ethical issues which arise from such practices.

Organization of the Literature Review

The literature review is organized into three main sections: clothing consumption trends, the secondhand clothing trade, and the economic, environmental and ethical issues relating to discard practices. The first section provides an overview of consumption trends in the clothing industry as related to individual, family, and external environmental variables.

The second section provides a detailed discussion of the secondhand clothing trade. It includes an overview of the historic significance of secondhand clothing in Europe since 1550, a number of developmental issues including social influences which have contributed to the popularity of secondhand clothing in North America over the past four decades, the historic involvement of charity

organizations in the secondhand clothing trade, and marketing strategies of secondhand clothing organizations, as well as implications of those strategies. Contemporary issues are addressed by examining formal research and popular literature. Sources or availability of secondhand clothing and industries which reprocess secondhand clothing are discussed as environmental factors which influence the demand for secondhand clothing.

Finally, the global implications of marketing secondhand clothing are explored. Environmental issues involve the conservation of natural resources through the reprocessing of secondhand clothing and textile waste destined for rapidly-filling landfill sites. Ethical implications include the effects of North American exports on local and international markets.

Trends in Clothing Consumption

Consumption has been defined generally as the use of goods and services. Winakor (1969) applied the consumption process to clothing by expanding the definition. She described it as a process with three main components--acquisition, inventory or stock, and discard--and included financial expenditures for and use of clothing and related services. Numerous researchers agree that clothing consumption relates not only to new clothing, but also to used clothing (Hammerstrom, 1985; Horn, 1968; Richardson, 1981).

Clothing consumption is often analyzed at the individual and family levels in relation to socio-economic, demographic, and lifestyle variables. Environmental variables which affect clothing consumption include social, political, and economic factors, and include technology and sources or availability of clothing. The following section explores these variables.

Individual and Family Variables

Researchers approach relationships between clothing consumption and consumer variables from various perspectives depending on the purpose of their study. Governments, for instance, look at proportions of clothing expenditures to overall expenditures, clothing consumption related to income, comparisons of clothing expenditures among regions and among industries, and comparisons of clothing costs over periods of time. Other researchers have examined clothing consumption from these and other diverse perspectives.

Socio-economic Relationships. Extensive research has addressed clothing consumption in relation to socio-economic factors. Nielsen (1978) investigated clothing consumption in Canada by analyzing the effect of a number of social and economic factors. She found that life cycle and family size strongly influenced both per capita expenditures on clothing and the percentage of total expenditures allocated for clothing. She also found that in terms of family clothing expenditures, the largest amount went to children (40.8%), followed by female adults (33.7%), then male adults (25.5%). Crowle, Fedorak & Burwell (1982) investigated the adequacy of social assistance allowances for clothing for persons living in Saskatchewan and determined that seasonal changes relating to geographic location are key considerations.

In similar studies in the United States, Hammerstrom (1985) reported that the importance of clothing in relation to total expenditures showed a steady decline to 1981. Winakor (1989) confirmed that while the proportion of expenditures that families allocate for clothing remained approximately constant across income ranges in any given year, it had fallen at all income levels over the last half-century, suggesting changes in the clothing consumption process.

Demographic Variables. While socio-economic factors are useful in

examining clothing consumption trends, demographics also provide practical information. Demographics provide characteristics of segments of human populations, such as age, family composition, level of education, employment status, occupation, and geographic region. Demographic variables have been used since the 1920s in market research as a useful tool in segmenting target populations, and they continue to be used in Canadian clothing research (Crowle, Fedorak & Burwell, 1982; Frisbee, 1985; Nielsen, 1978). Additionally, demographic characteristics are considered to alter continuously with shifts in population growth, age distribution, and other influences. Demographics are, therefore, critical tools when evaluating clothing consumption trends.

Lifestyle Influences. Demographic information has often been supplemented with lifestyle measures to address ways in which people live and spend their time and money. Lifestyle includes such discretionary activities as those related to work, leisure and exercise, interests, self-perceptions, socializing, and travel. Lifestyle also deals with attitudes relating to how people view themselves and others and how they feel about life and events. While lifestyle information is not generally product-specific, it has been used in segmenting clothing markets as an indicator of differences among groups of consumers. For example, Shim & Drake (1989) compared apparel search techniques based on lifestyle criteria and found differences related to attractiveness, travel proneness, and social activity.

Household Discard Practices. Discard as the final stage of the consumption process (Winakor, 1969) is particularly important to the secondhand clothing trade. It is this stage of the consumption process that generates the potential to repeat the 'obtaining-consuming-disposing' cycle. At this stage a new clothing

consumption cycle may begin, one which involves 'secondhand' clothing.

In light of recent concerns about the environmental impact of product consumption, clothing disposition practices are receiving increased research attention. Several researchers have examined clothing discards in relation to personal characteristics and values. Vyverberg (1976) learned that individuals differed in their willingness to wear a damaged garment before discarding it. VeVerka (1974) explored attitudes toward inactive and discarded clothing and suggested that inactive garments provide value to owners by merely being available for use. She proposed that if a garment is discarded before it is completely worn out an economic loss occurs, but if the garment is utilized by another individual no loss may occur. Hall (1975) compared discard habits among women in various life cycle stages and determined that factors such as social acceptability, social recognition, and psychological comfort affected their views of clothing significantly, but that more clothing was discarded for physical than for social reasons. Fratzke (1976) investigated the relationship between personal values and clothing discards in light of the declining availability of natural resources. She concluded that families needed to become aware of reasons for clothing waste such as ill fit, poor condition, and unintentional disuse, and that they must find strategies to deal with these problems.

Stephens (cited in Butler, 1994) summarized a number of personal and garment-related reasons for inactivity or disposal which related to fashion, appearance, construction, damage, source, wardrobe compatibility, storage, preference changes, and wearing opportunities. Shim (1995) investigated consumers' clothing disposal behaviours as they related to attitudes toward the environment and waste recycling and learned that recycling behaviour related to

materials such as metal, glass, and paper was a weak predictor of clothing disposal patterns. She suggested that individual and family characteristics, personality traits and lifestyles, and social, physical and psychological situational variables may also be key variables in clothing disposal practices.

Socio-economic, demographic and lifestyle factors have also been explored in relation to discards. Greig (1975) examined relationships between infrequently worn garments and individual variables and concluded that specific items varied in disuse according to the consumer's age, number of dependents, lifestyle, education, and income. Butler and Francis (1993) compared methods of discarding and found that consumers disposed of clothing in a variety of ways, usually in a non-remunerative manner, and most often through charity organizations. Further, Butler (1994) found that consumer practices relating to clothing discards remained similar to those of 30 to 40 years ago, possibly because of a lack of new, more convenient options being introduced or a lack of new technologies being adopted for fiber recycling.

Environmental Variables

In addition to individual and family characteristics, environments in which individuals and families exist are also important in understanding consumption patterns. Factors such as production technology, consumer sources, and the availability of clothing are components of an external environment which also affect clothing consumption.

Technology. Technology refers to processes relating to mechancial arts or applied sciences within an environment which is human-constructed or manipulated. In order to appreciate the affect of changes in technology on clothing consumption, it is useful to reflect upon historic developments relating to

clothing production.

Prior to 1800, most clothing was custom made by tailors, dressmakers, and homemakers, with rare ready-to-wear garments being relegated to individuals of low status. Technological advances and changing social conditions during the industrial revolution resulted in a ready-made clothing industry. These advances included the automation of spinning and weaving to produce inexpensive fabric, the arrival of the sewing machine in the mid-1800s, the development of men's standard sizing at the time of the American Civil War, and multiple layer cutting which followed in 1872. The cheap labour resulting from European immigration, when combined with technological advances, resulted in the majority of men's wear in the United States being ready-made by the latter part of the century. By 1920, much of women's dress was also mass produced (Heisey, 1984). The advent of computer technology since the 1960s, with its application in pattern drafting, grading, marker making, fabric cutting, and numerous design and construction techniques, has served to reinforce mass production processes (Taylor, 1990).

Technological changes over the past two centuries significantly altered the clothing industry. Mechanization and innovation in construction processes transformed the clothing industry from individual craftsmanship to mass production which served to increase the availability of clothing and reduce its cost. These effects, in turn, dramatically increased clothing consumption.

Sources and Availability of Clothing. Clothing types can be broadly categorized as new or used. Sources of clothing vary according to the type of merchandise provided, the type of service offered, the convenience of shopping, and the business practices of the outlet (Horn, 1968). The sources for used clothing are often different than those for new clothing. New clothing sources can

include home sewing, custom tailoring, clothing provided by employers which is often protective clothing or uniforms, and consumer purchases from retail, wholesale or factory outlets, catalogue shopping, and electronic media shopping such as television, telephone, computer, video. Used clothing, on the other hand, can include that borrowed, exchanged, handed down or up, remodelled, rented, or purchased used. Frequent sources of used clothing include clothing rental outlets, garage sales, clothing auctions, individuals and families who pass along used clothing, charity organizations, and commercial retail outlets.

Clothing Consumption Trends: A Summary

Consumption trends relating to the acquisition, use, and disposal of clothing are influenced by a number of personal factors relating to economic, demographic, and lifestyle characteristics. They are also influenced by environmental factors such as technology developments and sources or availability of clothing. A general understanding of clothing consumption trends facilitates a detailed examination of a specific category of clothing which is consumed, that of used or secondhand clothing.

Secondhand Clothing Trade

Secondhand clothing is differentiated from that which is new by its status in the clothing life cycle at the point of acquisition. While clothing which is acquired for the first time in its life cycle is considered to be new clothing, that which is re-entering the 'acquisition-consumption-disposal' cycle is regarded as secondhand clothing. In order to fully appreciate the role of secondhand clothing, a detailed discussion of the history and development of a variety of used clothing organizations will provide valuable insights into their current and future

operations and practices.

This section traces the earliest records of secondhand clothing transactions to 16th Century Europe. The secondhand clothing trade in North America over the past century is then explored within the context of charity organizations and social factors which have influenced its popularity. Contemporary issues are presented including current sources or availability of secondhand clothing and the relationship of secondhand clothing to other industries.

Secondhand Clothing: An Historical Overview

Since North American secondhand clothing has received little formal investigation, it is useful to consider the history of the British experience. While there are few records of the trade, secondhand clothing dealings affected a great number of people (Ginsburg, 1980; Lemire, 1988; 1991; Tozer & Levitt, 1983). While it was a "largely invisible trade leaving few records and generating no legislation...(it was) a common feature of English life and met the needs of much of the English population in a way that other manufacturing trades and industries did not" (Lemire, 1988, p. 1). Lemire traced the used clothing trade from 1550, attributing its development to the need for substitute clothing by those unable to afford to purchase new, with its popularity related to the time it took for industrialized production to offer fashionable new clothing at reasonable prices.

By 1700 much of the secondhand clothing trade was centered in London where directories and insurance records suggest that clothing dealers, tailors, pawnbrokers, street vendors, shopkeepers, and auctioneers of used clothing were regarded as respectable businessmen who earned a decent living from shops, market stalls, and street pedalling. Their sources of clothing included cast-offs from royalty, the wealthy, and employers conferring favours to servants

(Ginsburg, 1980; Lemire, 1991). Another source of used clothing, however, was by theft conducted on a massive scale by both amateur and professional thieves. In fact, clothing thefts were reported to be the second most common type of theft in certain British centers during the eighteenth century. This illegally acquired clothing was often channelled through pawnbrokers who offered ready cash or easy credit to their clientele (Lemire, 1991).

Payments for used clothing were in amounts approximating one-quarter that of new clothing, and often paid by barter of china and plants as well as by monetary transactions. The purchasers were the low-class and poor, with secondhand clothing regarded as an "intolerable and intentionally misleading pretense" (Ginsburg, 1980, p. 122) for upper classes.

By the 1850s, the secondhand clothing trade had flourished significantly, with large sales districts, rag fairs, and export trade which continue today. In the latter part of the century, 'provincial dealers' advertised discrete purchases by non-local agents, supporting both the discard and resale of clothing. Areas such as London's Petticoat Lane and Rosemary Lane were established as permanent secondhand clothing venues (Ginsburg, 1980; Tozer & Levitt, 1983).

As ready-made clothing increased the variety and lowered prices, people felt a pride in buying new clothing. Charities became involved in providing clothing for the poor, but with a change in attitudes toward self-help, the rummage or jumble sale flourished through the Depression of the 1930s, and continued to grow. The Nearly New and Charity Shops of social organizations were developed based on a Canadian idea which assumed purchases were less degrading than a weekly scramble (Ginsburg, 1980).

The effects of rationing and shortages during World War II rekindled an

interest in clothing exchanges, particularly for children's clothing. Mothers who would rarely have shopped at secondhand outlets happily sought them out, not only for the economic advantage or necessity, but as an expression of helping the war effort (Guppy, 1978).

More recently, while many original rag sections have closed or moved, other areas are prospering with boutiques that offer a variety of used clothing. Contemporary descriptions for this used clothing include 'antique' clothing (20 years and older) and 'trend' clothing (10-20 years) sold on commission for approximately one-third the price of new clothing (Ginsburg, 1980). As well, charity organizations which market used clothing continue to co-exist with commercial venues throughout the country.

While there is little formal documentation regarding the secondhand clothing trade, its existence in Britain is evident since at least the mid-1500s, and it has affected a large segment of that population. Furthermore, while consumption patterns reflecting both individual and environmental variables have changed, the trade of secondhand clothing continues as a viable business enterprise serving a variety of consumer and organizational needs and objectives.

Secondhand Clothing and North American Charities

Charity organizations have played a role as major handlers of secondhand clothing in North America since the turn of the century. An examination of two prominent charity organizations involved with secondhand clothing reveals unique organizational objectives, varied client bases, and adaptive business practices of these organizations.

The Salvation Army. From its humble beginnings among the working class and poor of East London in 1865, the evangelical crusade of William and Catherine

Booth grew to become the Salvation Army (Collins, 1984; Coutts, 1978; McKinley, 1980; 1986), a multi-faceted, socially-oriented organization. Their social programs, while intended to help the poor, were designed to "avoid the stigma of charity" (p. 95), believing that pure charity was degrading.

The Salvation Army expanded across the Atlantic to the United States in 1879 and to Canada by 1882. As a source of income for its rehabilitation programs, 'salvage brigades' were initiated in 1896 which collected household discards including clothing for resale in Army shelter programs. These collections grew to become one of the Salvation Army's most important branches of social work (McKinley, 1986).

Solicitation methods have included door-to-door contact, mailed postcards, pamphlet and handbill distribution, paper bag distributions in promising neighbourhoods, newspaper advertisements, and later, telephone calls. Clothing collection methods were upgraded from handcarts to horse-drawn wagons, then trucks and collection bins at drop-off locations. The number and strength of clothing programs has fluctuated with major wars, economic depression and unemployment, market prices for salvage textiles and paper, and most recently, with the popularity of garage sales. Merchandising strategies have become sophisticated with the publication of detailed manuals outlining customer relations, store organization, product displays, and marketing techniques (McKinley, 1986).

Secondhand clothing has become the largest single source of income in the social service centers of the Salvation Army, with 74% of departmental income nationwide coming from stores in 1965, and an additional 13% coming from waste sales including paper and rags. By the late 1960s, million dollar centers

were operating in Los Angeles, Detroit, Brooklyn, and Miami, and incomes from secondhand merchandise continued to escalate through the 1970s. The mid-1980s, however, brought financial hardship to clothing programs. The proliferation of flea markets, yard sales, and consignment shops provided stiff competition, drop off bins were being vandalized reducing the amount of useable inventory, and a changed clientele requiring more intensive rehabilitation offered fewer 'salvage' skills for processing secondhand merchandise (McKinley, 1986; Wiltshire, 1989a).

The Salvation Army began exporting secondhand clothing to countries in the Middle East, Asia, and Central America in the 1960s. Dealers anxiously sought the steady supply of materials from the Salvation Army which now had over half a century of success with secondhand clothing. This export trade fluctuated with the value of the American dollar abroad, and with political and social conditions in foreign countries, but remained tremendously profitable and intensely competitive (McKinley, 1986). In Britain, over 1,000 Salvation Army textile banks attract about 24,000 tonnes of clothing and shoes each year. This clothing is transported to a warehouse depot which the Salvation Army operates in conjunction with a textile reprocessing company. The clothing is then sorted, with 20% sent to Africa, Pakistan, and Eastern Europe for sale, 30% sold as industrial wipe cloths, and 45% remanufactured into felt, upholstery filling, insulation and other applications ("Any old clothes?" 1994).

While today's Salvation Army has expanded funding sources to include a number of campaigns, legacies, investments, other earnings, and government grants, the secondhand stores have remained a cornerstone of social service programs. Clients still include those who cannot afford new, but also include not-

so-needy bargain hunters who frequent Sally-Ann stores for unique and special occasion apparel (Wiltshire, 1989a) or for 'investments' in such items as denim jeans likely headed for foreign black markets (Collins, 1984).

Goodwill Industries. Goodwill Industries was founded in the United States in 1902 when Methodist minister Edgar J. Helmes accepted a posting to work among the poor immigrants of South Boston. Helmes carried a burlap sack to wealthier areas of the city, soliciting unwanted garments and other goods. Poor men and women were retained to restore the articles, and in so doing, learned vocational skills. Repaired items were resold, with the money used to pay the workers' wages (Goodwill Industries, 1993).

Goodwill's program of collecting, processing, and selling donated goods quickly spread across the United States, helping people who were socially and economically disadvantaged and who faced diverse barriers to employment by providing occupational skills and opportunities. In 1926, Goodwill launched an international campaign, and today is the world's largest private sector employer of disabled and disadvantaged people with 179 organizations in the United States and Canada, and 50 associate members in 35 other countries. In 1992, they had 1,354 retail stores in Canada, the United States and Pacific Basin, with store revenues of $383 million helping to offset costs of rehabilitation services for clients. An additional 65 stores are located in ten other countries (Goodwill Industries, 1993).

Goodwill supports service programs through sales of donated goods. Although Goodwill is a full-line discount retailer, their special emphasis is on secondhand clothing. Clothing is collected not only from households, but also from manufacturers and other retailers. Domestic clothing is collected in several ways,

two of which include drop-off centers at fixed or rotating locations and target solicitation programs which utilize direct mailings. Goodwill workers then screen, sort, and prepare items for sale in the retail stores or for reuse in other markets. Marketing strategies emphasize efficiency in the handling of donated items since rapid turnaround is considered essential to retail sales profits. Stores have recently been modernized to attract a broad base of clientele, and marketing strategies are continually reviewed to address declines in store revenues since 1982 (Goodwill Industries, 1993; Goodwill Rehabilitation, 1993).

Goodwill is proud of its recycling efforts. In 1990, Goodwill processed more than 550 million pounds of donated textiles (Goodwill Industries, 1993). Textiles account for 69% of thrift store sales and 59% of units sold. The typical clothing mix consists of about 60% women's clothing, 30% children's clothing and 10% menswear, with garment condition, fashion, and fiber content being important factors in determining what is done with the clothing after it is received (Francis, Butler, McDonald & Turnbow, 1990). Clothing that is unsold is recycled as scrap material or is reprocessed in other ways, resulting in less solid waste discards destined for landfill sites. In 1992, salvage sales accounted for $42 million in Canada, the United States, and Pacific Basin. The Goodwill systems in North America process more than 300 million kilograms of textiles donated at more than 4,400 dropoff points and 1,200 outlets each year ("Goodwill major supplier," 1993). In addition to promoting a clean environment, Goodwill claims to support a global outlook in both the people it supports and its waste recycling programs (Goodwill Industries, 1993).

Commercial Organizations and Charity. Recently, concern has been expressed about the practice of commercial organizations using the name of a

charity when promoting collections to the public and then paying only a small percentage of the profits to the charity ("Any old clothes?", 1994; Beaty, 1991a; 1991b; Ketcham, 1991; "Thrift Shop," 1991). Australian 'rent-a-charity' programs are being accused of misleading the public. Tasmania has introduced legislation which precludes the use of charity names by commercial companies. Similar concerns are surfacing in Spain where textile recovery is relatively new ("Any old clothes?", 1994). In the United States, the Military Order of the Purple Heart, Amvets, and Value Village are receiving criticism for contracting out solicitation services to charity organizations (Beaty, 1991a; 1991b; Ketcham, 1991; "Thrift Shop", 1991).

In Canada, Value Village is receiving a great deal of attention relating to the solicitation practices of its numerous clothing outlets. This organization, established in Seattle in 1954 by ex-Salvation Army Major William Ellison, was among the top 100 privately-owned companies in Washington, with sales of $50 million U.S. in secondhand clothing and household goods in 1990. Value Village established their first Canadian store in Vancouver in 1980 and has since expanded across the country (Morley, 1994; Beaty, 1991b).

Value Village contracts inventory acquisition services out to local charities, which, in turn, solicit clothing donations from the public. These donations are then sold by weight to Value Village, with portions of the funds going toward helping needy clients, and portions going toward administrative and other expenses. Of $50 million in sales, approximately $17 million was paid to Canadian and U.S. charities involved in supplying the used clothing. In Alberta, $1.8 million was paid to Integration Alberta, the fund-raising arm of the Alberta Association for Community Living which spent 11% of the funds on direct aid to

the mentally handicapped (Beaty, 1991a; 1991b; Morley, 1994; Ketcham, 1991).

While Value Village publicly acknowledges their profit motive, they counter criticism of their solicitation methods by suggesting they are proud of creating an employment base and raising money for charity (Beaty, 1991b). Others support the entrepreneurial spirit of Value Village for their multiple successes in generating profit, funding charity projects, creating employment, and recycling used materials, but suggest contract agencies should be more forthright when soliciting donations from the public ("Thrift Shop", 1991).

Secondhand Clothing and Charities: A Summary. While Salvation Army and Goodwill stores are considered profit-oriented secondhand clothing outlets, their clothing programs are designed to promote social goals including employing and training disadvantaged people and providing rehabilitation programs. Other commercial organizations support charitable agencies by contracting their solicitation services. In both types of organizations, large quantities of secondhand clothing provide the resources critical to attaining diverse objectives.

Social Influences on the Demand for Secondhand Clothing

The acquisition of clothing has rarely been related strictly to functional necessity, for clothing is considered an aesthetic as well as a symbolic measure of self expression (Cunningham, 1991; Faurschou, 1987; Kaiser, 1990; Wilson, 1988). Clothing, in addition to satisfying a basic human requirement, also reflects vocational, political, religious, socio-economic, and cultural messages.

While secondhand clothing has long been acknowledged as a valuable and popular source of attire, it is only recently that it has become associated with fashion. Calasibetta (1988) not only includes references to terms such as flea market looks, attic looks, and vintage clothing in her fashion dictionary, she also

differentiates among them based on geographic location and source of clothing. Flea market looks are described as old clothing and accessories from former eras sold and worn as contemporary items in Paris and England in the late 1960s. Attic looks, a term introduced in the United States in the 1970s, refers to old clothes and accessories found in attics. In the 1980s old clothing which was sold in specialty or exotic shops became known as vintage attire.

Secondhand clothing has also been associated with subculture movements over the past two decades, including punks, hippies, and the more recent trend to 'grunge'. Punk clothing, launched in the early 1970s by British lower class youth, was rooted in anti-establishment behaviour seen in black clothing with metal studs and safety pin body piercing. The American middle class youth who quickly adopted the look as an expression of uniqueness, looked to secondhand stores and street vendors as sources ("Attic Attitude," 1993; McRobbie, 1994; Nordquist, 1991).

Similarly the hippie movement of the 1960s looked to secondhand stores for clothing symbols of simplicity, frugality, and anti-establishment attitudes (McRobbie, 1994). Torbet (1973) reflected these values in her book on hippie looks, Clothing Liberation: Out of the Closets and into the Streets, a compendium of 'do-it-yourself' ethnic dress suggestions using old clothing.

'Grunge' is the 1990s androgynous fashion statement of youth, relating to baggy pants, oversize shirts, boots, and caps (McRobbie, 1994). These items, often assembled through secondhand shops, are also influencing new clothing designers who suggest the 'secondhand look' of grunge is now high fashion (O'Brien, 1993).

Contemporary Interest in Secondhand Clothing

While the phenomenon of secondhand clothing has endured for several centuries and affected a great number of people in both Europe and North America, little formal research exists which documents its development and the environments in which it has flourished. A review of popular literature, when combined with the limited research available, provides some understanding of the current impact of the secondhand clothing trade, and offers insights for its future effects on human quality of life.

Popular Literature. Popular literature confirms the ongoing intrigue with secondhand clothing. The Globe and Mail recently announced that "shopping at resale boutiques provides excitement that is often missing from ordinary stores" and provides discount prices on a variety of both high and low end merchandise (Gibb-Clark & Hossie, 1992, p. D1). Vogue (Betts, 1993) suggested that the excitement is not related just to the clothes, but to the possibility of meeting celebrities who frequent the shops. Maclean's magazine called it "increasingly trendy to wear someone else's discards [and experience] the pleasures of dressing up in antique fashions" (Dobbie, 1978). Marketing News hypothesized that consumers are fulfilling unmet needs for "simplicity, clarity and believability" (Schroeer, 1992, p. 4) of bygone days in shopping for secondhand garments. Ms. magazine suggested "retro dressing enables a child of the seventies to recreate the allure of her mother's life" (McNamara, 1980, p. 32), filling needs for nostalgia, glamour, romance and thrill. Nation's Business offered a more practical explanation: "frugality is fashionable" (Nelton, 1992, p. 63).

Whatever the reasons for consumer interest, marketing secondhand clothing has become big business as operations expand, new outlets open and sales figures increase. Entrepreneurial success stories abound (Bee, 1982;

Dobbie, 1978; Gibb-Clark & Hossie, 1992; Nelton, 1992; Wiltshire, 1989b). Canadian realtors express surprise at a changing secondhand clothing trade which occupies prestigious space in downtown business locations ("Now they call 'em," 1992).

The number of secondhand clothing organizations, in itself, confirms the significance of the trade, particularly in view of the extremely competitive nature of the clothing retail industry. The number of thrift and resale shops selling clothing and household items is estimated at 25,000 in the United States, with location, high turnover of merchandise, and specialized customer service cited as critical factors of success (Boyles, 1989). In the City of Edmonton, Canada's fifth largest city with a population of 618,000 and one of the world's largest fashion shopping malls (City of Edmonton, 1993), more than 60 outlets offer a variety of secondhand clothing at discount prices (McFadyen, 1993).

The secondhand clothing trade continues to change and grow. It is more than salvage collections and local charity projects. It has grown into a profitable business activity captivating the interest of small entrepreneurs as well as prestigous business and financial groups. "Whatever the terminology, what it adds up to is unprecedented change in the retail industry--the product of an unusual and unique confluence of trends and developments [including] shifting demographics, a revolution in consumer values, too many stores [and] a changing playing field" ("Now they call 'em," 1992).

Formal Research. The secondhand clothing trade of North America, similar to that of Britain, has received little research attention, yet it affects clothing consumption in significant ways. Hammerstrom (1985) investigated the relationship of new and used clothing sales to economic indicators and concluded

that the best predictors for sales of used clothing were the Consumer Price Index and new clothing retail sales. She also confirmed the acceptance of used clothing in view of increased sales and the proliferation of outlets.

Corbeill, Moore & Plican (1975) investigated physical and socio-psychological reasons for non-use of wearing apparel and attitudes toward recycling, and concluded that much consumer education was required in altering attitudes toward secondhand clothing. Rucker (1981), in a California secondhand store survey, found that willingness to wear secondhand clothing appeared to be situational in that secondhand was appropriate for casual wear but not for formal occasions. Acceptance also decreased with the proximity of the garment to the body as demonstrated by differences in attitudes toward used coats and used undergarments. While positive attitudes toward used clothing and the number of years the respondent shopped at thrift stores were key predictors of used clothing consumption, other factors such as cost, condition, and fashionability of the garment were main reasons for purchase decisions.

Richardson (1981) attempted to identify consumers of secondhand clothing using demographic, attitudinal, and environmental factors. She determined that patronage of secondhand clothing stores was linked to specific consumer characteristics including age, employment status, income, fashion innovativeness, and specific uses for the clothing including work and home. She found that females comprised the majority of patrons, with the largest proportion in the 18-29 age category. In terms of consumption patterns, she found that larger families used more secondhand clothing, and that a positive trend existed toward used clothing by higher as well as lower income groups.

Limited research on secondhand clothing is available through Statistics

Canada reports which include not just clothing, but also clothing accessories or parts, blankets and travelling rugs, bed linen, table linen, toilet and kitchen linen, and furnishing articles other than carpets and tapestries, which show signs of appreciable wear (Government of Canada, 1988). Canada imports approximately $10,000,000 in worn clothing and textiles annually (Statistics Canada, 1993; 1994). The value of imported goods is based on a transaction value which basically is the price paid for the goods to be sold for export to Canada and forms the basis of the tariff charged by the federal government when the goods enter the country (Canadian Importers Association Inc., 1988; McGoldrick, 1994).

Canada exports approximately $27,500,000 in used clothing to various countries around the world. Africa receives much of Canada's secondhand clothing, with export values of $619,000 and $475,000 reported for Uganda and Zaire respectively for a single month in September 1994. For the same month exports to the United States totalled $89,000 (Statistics Canada, 1993; 1994).

In light of the media attention and formal research devoted to secondhand clothing, it is obvious that this clothing continues to serve a variety of needs for a large number of people. Relationships have been analyzed using physiological, socio-economic, psychological, demographic, lifestyle, and other consumer and environmental variables. Results of these investigations suggest secondhand clothing continues to contribute to a vibrant trade throughout the world.

Marketing Secondhand Clothing

While it is useful to examine the secondhand clothing trade in historic, sociological, and economic contexts, it is also important to consider other environmental influences. The availability or sources of secondhand clothing and the demand of industries which depend on the secondhand clothing as resources

are key issues to consider.

Contemporary Sources of Secondhand Clothing. The number and variety of organizations which handle secondhand clothing are believed to influence its popularity among consumers. Secondhand clothing can be obtained through several sources, including borrowing (Richardson, 1981), exchanging (Lipson, 1984), handing down or up (Kaiser, 1990), or remodelling (Crown, 1977; Funaro, 1976; Lawson, 1977; Torbet, 1973). It can also be purchased at garage sales (Winakor & Martin, 1963), through charities (Goodwill Industries, 1993; McKinley, 1986; Wiltshire, 1989a) and at bazaars (Brown, 1993). Auctions are often a source of antique clothing (Greenberg, 1983; Irick-Nauer, 1983; Love, 1982; "Vintage Clothing Sale," 1991), and rentals accommodate those looking for special needs, employment requirements, or formal wear (Jackson, 1994; "Now Corporations are Leasing Suits," 1980).

Retail outlets, however, are the most common sources of secondhand clothing. They acquire clothing in several ways. Some purchase it from auctions, private sales, contract agencies, and retailers who accept returned clothing, then re-sell it, often at prices 50% to 80% lower than the cost of new garments. Others accept it on a consignment basis, returning a portion of the sale price to the consignee. A third type sells clothing which is donated (Jackson, 1994; Nelton, 1992).

Consignment sales are generally based on a two-month contract period in which stylish clothes return between 20% to 50% of the original retail cost (Boyles, 1989; Hofmann, 1993; Jackson, 1994; Wiltshire, 1989b). Proceeds are often distributed as a 50-50 sharing with the original owner (Hofmann, 1993; Nelton, 1992). In response to the critical necessity of tracking consignment merchandise,

a computer software program called Clothes II has been developed to maintain consignor files, print labels and cheques, and generate inventory reports for clothing consignment outlets (Boyles, 1989).

Charity organizations often accept donated clothing from a number of sources including companies going out of business and manufacturers who donate end runs and seconds (Wiltshire, 1989a). The majority of clothing, however, is donated by individuals and families through drop-offs at bin locations or distribution outlets, or through curbside collections ("Any old clothes?" 1994; Francis, Butler, McDonald & Turnbow, 1990; Goodwill Industries, 1993; McKinley, 1986; Morley, 1994; Wiltshire, 1989b). The volume of women's clothing has been estimated to be ten times more than men's, with a constant supply of baby clothes because of their limited period of use (Wiltshire, 1989a).

As consumers of new clothing are influenced by retail store attributes such as store image, service, and quality of merchandise, so are consumers of secondhand clothing who differentiate between a thrift shop and trendy vintage shop. Such differences relate to personal preferences, economic status, and other individual and environmental variables (Bee, 1982; Betts, 1993; Greenberg, 1983; Richardson, 1981).

Affects on Other Industries. For centuries secondhand clothing has satisfied physiological and economic needs of consumers and provided a source of livelihood for many dealers in the trade. More recently, it has also satisfied a variety of psychological needs for clothing consumers. Today the secondhand clothing trade continues to affect individuals and businesses in other ways. It inspires fashion, affects education, influences legislation, precipitates new businesses, and transforms global textile markets.

Remodelled clothing is the product of altering clothing. For decades fashion designers and home sewers have expounded the virtues of secondhand clothing for new uses or extended wear in 'how-to-remodel', 'where-to-shop', 'what-to-watch-for' publications (Crown, 1977; Funaro, 1976; Grimble, 1991; Lawson, 1977; Love, 1982).

The 'vintage look' of secondhand clothing contributes to the world of fashion design. Companies such as Levi Strauss which introduced denim a century ago are soliciting their own secondhand jeans for re-sale ("Rags to Riches," 1973). Overseas buyers gather at gigantic flea markets to buy an estimated 100,000 pairs of Levis jeans from the 1950-60s which can sell for $3,000 or more abroad (Hofmeister, 1994). Another group of dealers advertises 'Green for Jeans' throughout the United States, then tours the regions on appointed days to buy the jeans for 50 cents to $15 a pair and re-sells them to trendy vintage stores on the West Coast and abroad (Hofmeister, 1994). This used clothing, having undergone minimal or no transformation process, is promoted for its worn appearance.

The popularity of some secondhand clothing, however, relates to more substantial transformations. New design studios are emerging which purchase clothing at secondhand outlets and create patchwork designs which are well received internationally ("Any old clothes?" 1994; Talley, 1993). Other designers are borrowing the 'flea market aesthetic' and replicating the older styles in new lines (Carter, 1993; Siroto, 1993).

The recycling of clothing is a popular area of study at many secondary and post-secondary institutions. Sohn (1979) advocated teaching the recycling of clothing, not just because it saved money, but because it was a way for consumers

to conserve energy and raw materials used in apparel production, and to reduce pollutants emitted during these processes. She viewed the challenge of working with worn garments as a perfect outlet for student experimentation, resulting in increased self-confidence, artistic and innovative ability, and marketable alteration skills. Such a philosophy has been adopted by Alberta Education which recently implemented a Repair and Recycle module in the fashion design curriculum as part of Career and Technology Studies offered to secondary school students (Alberta Education, 1993). Recycle projects are also being undertaken at the post-secondary level in projects such as Capjack's Kimono Revisited (1993), a study of contemporary design utilizing recycled traditional Japanese garments as both the fabric source and design inspiration.

Antique clothing collecting and investing have become lucrative businesses. Love, a collector who has turned secondhand clothing into antique investing, sold 14,000 copies of her 1982 book Vintage Chic in its first five weeks. Others have published investors' guides with the aim of popularizing vintage fashion and standardizing prices for museum and private buyers (Irick-Nauer; 1983).

Collector conventions have been popular gatherings for secondhand clothing collectors in both Canada and the United States since 1984. They attract fashion designers, fabric designers from decorating firms, costume designers for movies and television, museum buyers, shop owners and many individual collectors (Snyder, 1992; Turner, 1990; "Vintage Clothing Sale," 1991).

The textile recycling industry, with approximately 350 agency members and 17,000 employees in the United States, purchases approximately 2.5 billion pounds of post-consumer textile waste each year (Council for Textile Recycling,

undated). The recycling of post consumer textile waste has become an extremely lucrative industry, with the United States recycling 1,250,000 tons of textile waste and generating sales of approximately one billion dollars annually (Stubin, 1991).

Textiles are sorted and graded into over 150 categories to produce three main end products--used clothing, which is the largest single use and accounts for 48%; fiber for paper or coarse yarn and padding in upholstery; and industrial wiping and polishing cloths for the domestic market. Other uses include auto insulation, stuffed toys, felt, roofing material, rugs, blankets, and soundproofing material ("Any old clothes?" 1994; Brown, 1993; Greenberg, 1992; Grove, 1994; Jablonowski & Carlton, undated; McKinley, 1986; Polk, 1992; Reclamation Association, undated; Stubin, 1991; Textile Reclamation, 1994). Through recycling, primary resources are conserved by using reprocessed textile waste for the manufacture of new products without the creation of new hazardous waste or harmful by-products (Bureau International de la Recuperation, undated; Council for Textile Recycling, undated).

Informal economies are also affected by recycled clothing. Craft artisans are turning to secondhand clothing shops as a source of inexpensive construction materials for such items as woven rugs and textile/wearable art which are marketed at craft festivals and art markets across the country ("A Housecleaning," 1993; McFadyen, 1993; Sentar, 1992).

Secondhand Clothing Trade: A Summary

The trade in secondhand clothing historically has affected many people in significant ways. Britain's secondhand clothing trade, documented since 1550, provided affordable clothing to masses of consumers and a source of livelihood to

numerous vendors. North American charities have traded secondhand clothing since the turn of the century, using it primarily as a source of income for social programs. Since the 1960s, subculture groups have adopted used clothing as an expression of a simplistic lifestyle. Secondhand clothing continues to influence fashion, education, and the economy through a proliferation of secondhand outlets and related business enterprises which, directly and indirectly, enhance human well-being in a variety of ways.

Environmental and Ethical Issues

Secondhand clothing which is not recycled as wearable used clothing or reprocessed for new uses is discarded in other ways. Great quantities of used clothing are exported overseas, and large amounts are directed to landfill sites as solid waste. While these disposal methods may satisfy particular needs of secondhand clothing organizations, they may also have adverse effects on human well-being which are both long-term and global in nature.

Environmental Issues Relating to Used Clothing Discards

Textile waste can be categorized as waste generated during the manufacture of yarns and fabric, waste generated in the manufacture of garments, or clothing waste of discarded garments. Clothing waste is categorized as post-consumer or post-use textile waste and is disposed of in several ways. It can be recycled domestically for same uses (wearable garments), it can be recycled by reprocessors for new uses, or it can be exported, incinerated, or deposited as solid waste in landfills (Council for Textile Recycling, undated; Sentar, 1992; Stubin, 1991).

The amount of post-consumer textile waste varies among nations. Western

Europe and North American textile discards, not including donations to charity organizations, are estimated at 3% to 5% of mixed household waste or between 7.6 - 8.8 million tons (Polk, 1992; Shim, 1995; Stubin, 1991; Textile Reclamation, 1994). In Alberta, textiles comprised about 2.1% of the solid waste stream, or about 35,000 tonnes, in 1991 (Sentar, 1992).

Recycling Programs. Recycling has become a popular concept, with definitions that vary across contexts. Quimby (1975), in discussing recycling as an alternative to disposal, provides a broad definition: (a) the reuse of products in the same capacity for which they were originally manufactured; (b) the processing of residuals to produce the same raw material used in the initial application; (c) the alteration of a basic material of the residual to a completely different kind of material. All three applications relate to secondhand clothing.

Environmentalism, often linked with recycling, has influenced business practices by encouraging reduced waste, more efficient use of resources, attitudes of stewardship, recycling waste into new products, and the adoption of environmentally-responsible activist programs. Environmentalism is also affecting consumers by changing the products they buy and how they use these products (Harrell & McConocha, 1992; Nulty, 1990). Faced with economic constraints and greater awareness, consumers are rejecting a throw-away society and are instead demanding products which promote a cleaner, safer environment. Whether as a result of legislation, social conscience, or business opportunity, views of environmentalism are changing from anti-littering and source reduction to include broader concerns for the long-term quality of life (Bartlett & Bartlett, 1992; Grove, 1994; Kirkpatrick, 1990; Langrehr, Lengrehr, & Tatreau, 1992; Nulty, 1990; Science Council of Canada, 1978).

Charity groups and textile reprocessing organizations are major textile recyclers. Shim (1995) reported that the Salvation Army alone processes two million pounds of used clothing each year. Riggle (1992) estimated the amount of textile waste collected by charities to be 1.25 million tons, approximately one-quarter of that potentially available. He also stated that these groups utilize approximately 500,000 tons and sell the balance to textile recycling firms. Approximately 200 companies in the United States sort and grade used textiles for same or other uses, and an additional 150 secondary processors export used clothing, manufacture wipers, or reprocess fiber for the manufacture of fabric (Riggle, 1992). In England, where the collection of old clothing has traditionally been operated by both charity organizations and merchants, between 25% and 50% of the clothing is exported to developing countries where it may be sold as is, repaired, or remodelled to add value (Textile Reclamation, 1994).

As well as diverting textile waste from landfills, recycling organizations which reprocess fibers also conserve energy and raw materials. Reprocessors of woolen clothing are able to produce both woven fabric and knitted products with a 50% reduction in energy consumption by recycling fibers as opposed to processing new fibers. Reprocessing textiles and reusing fibers not only conserves energy, but avoids the need to dye yarns, thereby reducing the environmental impact from the pollution these processes generate and the water they demand ("Textile Reclamation," 1994). DuPont is investigating nylon recycling technologies which break the polymer down into its main ingredients, then repolymerize it to make nylon in any form for any market where nylon is used. They predict that "nylon pantyhose [might then be] collected and chemically transformed into automobile components" ("DuPont," 1992, p. 16).

While such technologies have the potential to conserve energy and non-renewable resources, further development is needed where recycling certain fabrics yields fibers that are too short to be spun into yarn, and in recycling blended fabrics ("Barriers to Recycling," 1994; Grasso, in press).

A number of communities are developing textile recycle programs in the form of curbside collections and drop-off centers, some of which are in cooperation with charity organizations ("Charities Band Together," 1992; Riggle, 1992) while others sell directly to private reycling firms. At least six curbside collection programs have been established in the United States since 1990, one of the largest situated in a district of New York City (Jablonowski & Carlton, undated; Polk, 1992; Stubin, 1991). In Canada, the cities of Ottawa, Barrie, and Mississauga have expanded blue box recycling programs to include textiles ("Boxboard Recycling," 1992; "Charities Band Together," 1992). While these programs are in their early stages of development, economic advantages alone merit consideration. While the costs of separating textiles from other waste is not yet well understood, collection costs appear to be minimal and textiles are considered the second highest value in the waste stream after aluminium. As well, markets for used clothing and other textiles are stable, with the demand expected to remain strong (Jablonowski & Carlton, undated). Based on increasing waste disposal fees, mandated recycling rates, and the promise of positive revenue, textile recycling through curbside collection programs may provide environmentally-conscious disposal options to landfill programs.

Landfill Waste. Philosophies relating to recycling and environmentalism, however, are not consistently supported where clothing is concerned (Shim, 1995). Post-consumer textiles are often directed to landfill sites which scar

landscapes, are expensive to build and maintain, threaten environments with air, water and soil pollutants, and are quickly nearing capacity. To address these concerns, many municipalities are adopting goals of reducing solid waste by significant amounts by the year 2000 (Grove, 1994; "It's Tough," 1993; Kron, 1992; Miller, 1993; Sentar, 1992).

In Britain, 700,000 tonnes of textiles are sent to landfills each year (Textile Reclamation, 1994). In the United States, the amount of post-consumer textile waste has been estimated at approximately 4.5% of the residential waste stream, or 8.75 billion pounds. Of this amount, approximately 2.5 billion pounds are removed by textile recycling agencies (Council for Textile Recycling, undated). Other estimates place the amount of post-consumer textile waste at 4 million tons (8 billion pounds), of which 25% is collected, mostly by charity organizations (Riggle, 1992). The 1990 Franklin Associates report for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency placed the amount of textile waste at 4.9% or 7.6 million tons (15.2 billion pounds), with an additional 1.2 million tons (2.4 million pounds) being collected and recycled (Polk, 1992). The Franklin Associates 1992 Update projected that textiles comprise 5.3% of solid waste, and added that estimates are occasionally based on waste characterization studies which often include a range of textile products, some of which are not recycleable (Jablonowski & Carlton, undated).

Sentar (1992) reported that textiles comprised about 35,000 tonnes (77 million pounds) or 2.1% of solid waste generated in Alberta in 1991. Of this amount, 3,000 tonnes (6.6 million pounds) was collected for recycling, with the balance (32,000 tonnes) going to landfill. The report added that philanthrophy has historically been the main force behind textile collection in Alberta, "...and

this is still the case" (p. 29). With regard to trends, Sentar suggested that the textile recycling industry has not been heavily influenced by waste reduction targets of Alberta municipalities, likely because textiles represent such a small proportion of the waste stream, and that the industry operates much the same as it did in the past.

Because large amounts of post-consumer textiles enter landfills as solid waste each year, minimal reductions in the amount of textiles discarded in this manner are considered a significant achievement (Kron, 1992; Stubin, 1991). While programs to divert large quantities of secondhand clothing from landfills are being developed, occasionally cooperatively between charity organizations and other agencies in parts of the United States and Canada, few new initiatives for textile collection and recycling appear to have been developed in Alberta.

The International Trade in Used Clothing. The North American export of secondhand clothing affects the global marketplace in significant ways. In 1992 the United States and Canada exported more than 200,000 tonnes of secondhand clothing to Africa alone (Todd, 1993). Despite government policy which bans smuggled used clothing, China 'illegally' consumes secondhand western apparel because of its designer labels, modern styles, and low cost (Leung, 1991). Poland also has become one of the fastest growing markets for North American clothing, importing nearly twice as much as Russia in 1992 (Todd, 1993). Statistics Canada (1993; 1994) reported Canada exports worn clothing and textiles valued at approximately $27,500,000 per year to various countries around the world.

Ethical Issues Relating to the International Trade in Secondhand Clothing

The trade in secondhand clothing and textiles presents advantages and difficulties for both local and global communities (Figure 2.1). While some issues

can be appraised in economic terms, other broader issues must also be considered.

Exporters. For North American exporters, the trade supports the balance of trade and generates domestic tariff revenue (Canadian Importers Association, 1988; Council for Textile Recycling, undated). Exports represent a post-consumer disposal option which counters increasing waste disposal fees, supports mandated recycling rates, and encourages positive revenues in recycling programs in North America (Jablonowski & Carlton, undated).

Disadvantages of exports from North America relate to decreasing supply and rising sorting costs for a labour-intensive industry, resulting in lower profit for local reprocessors who divert textile waste from landfills. Decreasing supply has been partially attributed to actions of North American charities since many textile recyclers in Canada and the United States obtain much of their supply from charity organizations (Butler & Francis, 1993; Polk, 1992; Riggle, 1992; Sentar, 1992; Todd, 1993).

Further, the charities are being criticized for turning a profit on clothing which has been donated to them. Excess clothing is often sold to commercial recyclers who sort the clothing and ship it abroad for re-sale by local entrepreneurs at street markets, with each level turning a profit on the donated clothing. Many critics feel that "well-meaning donors, unaware of where their generosity leads--and the profits it generates--are the fuel for a little-explored form of commerce" (Todd, 1993, p. E1).

Importers. For importers of secondhand clothing, the trade satisfies demand in third world countries where hyperinflation rates force even middle and upper classes into buying secondhand clothing (Stubin, 1991). It also

provides inexpensive clothing and offers employment training for disadvantaged people in these countries (Goodwill Rehabilitation, 1993; McKinley, 1986; Sentar, 1992; Theo, 1992). It promotes secondary industry by providing employment to street vendors and reprocessing groups which remodel western clothing to meet local needs, or those that buy shredded clothing for use in manufacturing such articles as blankets (Hansen, 1993; Riggle, 1992).

On the other hand, imports of North American secondhand clothing are said to deprive developing countries of customs and tax revenue while intermediaries reap 200 to 500 percent returns or more on some clothing imports ("Goodwill major supplier," 1993; Theo, 1992). As well, African imports of secondhand clothing are accused of adversely affecting local economies by decreasing the demand for locally manufactured clothing and increasing unemployment in related industries (Allen, 1993; "Exporting the new," 1993; Maser, 1993; Puri, 1992). While permits are granted by third world governments for imports of recycled clothing intended for free distribution to the needy, large scale abuses estimated at one-fifth of total consumption are said to negatively affect the local manufacturing industry (Allen, 1993). Todd (1993) estimated that "one-third of Africa's 525 million people may now be wearing hand-me-downs shipped from North America, Europe, and Japan [creating] a continent-wide economy of dependency..." (p. E2). In the east African countries of Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya, measures have been taken to restrict or eliminate used clothing imports by including tax and duty, or by impounding "contraband textiles" (Puri, 1992, p. 20) to protect their own faultering textile industries.

The effects of exports appear complex. Theo (1992) felt that while secondhand clothing has threatened clothing manufacturing in Zambia by

depriving the government of customs and tax revenue, it has created jobs for an ever-rising number of unemployed people in that country. Hansen (1993) added that social influences similar to those in Canada and the United States which have contributed to the popularity of secondhand clothing by relating it to fashion or by providng lifestyle messages are also factors to be considered in relation to consumers in third world countries. She suggested that Zambians have been adapting western apparel for nearly a century, and their unique uses of the used clothing are historically meaningful within their culture. The export of secondhand clothing involves not only economics, but also social, political, and moral dilemmas which require ethical debate.

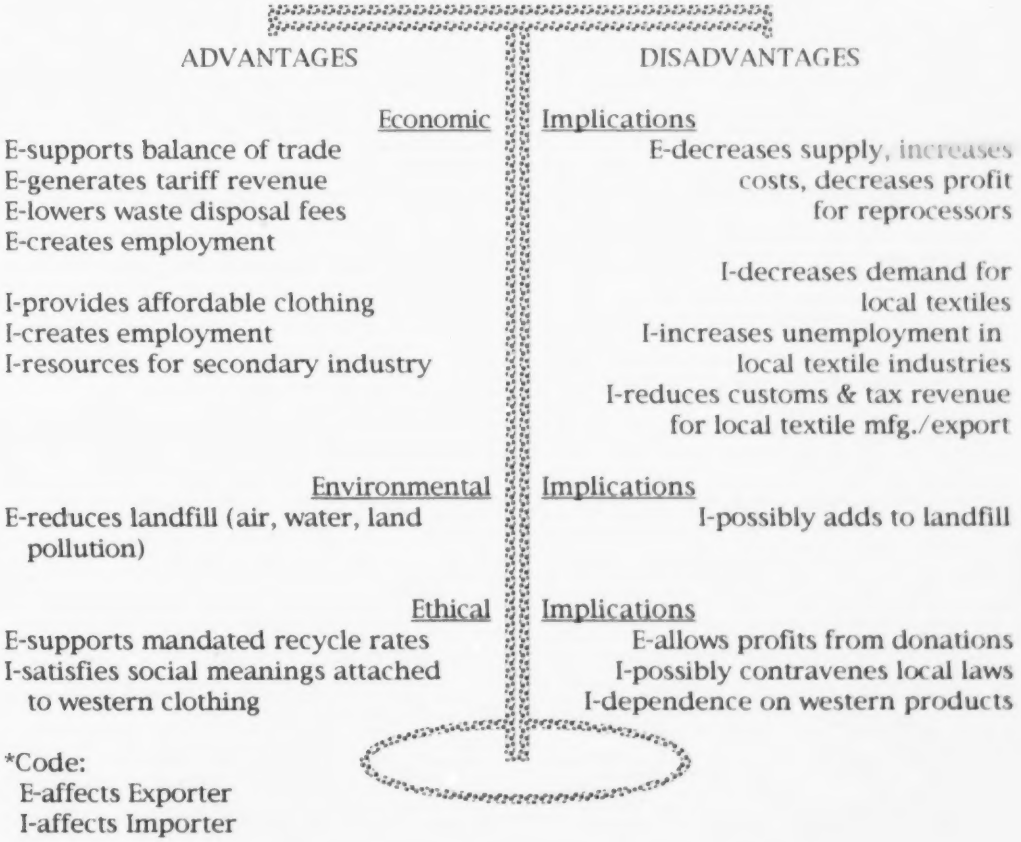


Figure 2.1 Economic, Environmental, and Ethical Issues

Environmental and Ethical Issues: A Summary

Unwanted secondhand clothing is categorized as post-use or post-consumer textile waste. Post-consumer textile waste can be disposed of in several ways. It can be recycled domestically as wearable clothing; it can be reprocessed for other uses; it can be exported, incinerated, or deposited as solid waste in landfills. Each of these disposal methods must be viewed within the context of not only economics, but also environmental and ethical issues in order to understand the broad implications for the well-being of local and global communities.

Summary of Literature Reviewed

The trade in secondhand clothing must be viewed from the broader context of clothing consumption which is affected by individual and family differences relating to economics, demography, and lifestyle. Individuals and family discard habits are particularly important to this trade since they contribute to the supply of secondhand clothing. Consumption trends are also affected by environmental influences relating to production technology, sources or availability of clothing, and marketing practices of clothing organizations.

Secondhand clothing, despite little research attention, has met needs of a great number of people for several centuries. The economic, environmental, and ethical implications of the secondhand clothing trade reverberate nationally and globally, influencing individuals, businesses, and nations in unexpected ways.

This study responds to a research void relating to the trade in secondhand clothing. It addresses the issue from multiple environmental and temporal perspectives. The issue raised throughout this examination of literature relates to the enhancement of human well-being as it relates to economic, environmental, and ethical implications of the trade in secondhand clothing.

Chapter III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this research was to provide information about a population of secondhand clothing organizations. The procedures that were carried out are presented in this chapter. Topics discussed include the conceptual framework used as the basis for the procedures, the type of research, the survey population, the instrument, data collection procedures, and analysis of the data.

Conceptual Framework

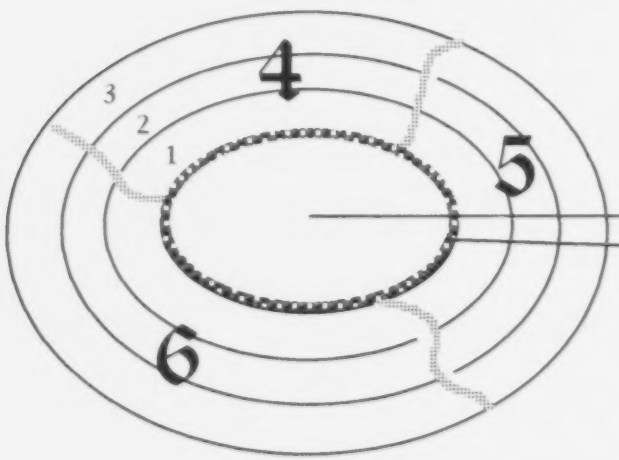
The conceptual framework used as the foundation for this research was a modified version of Kilsdonk's (1983) model of The Family and Its Near Environment Related to the Various Dimensions of the Total Human Environment presented in the Human Ecology Monograph Series entitled "Human Ecology: Meaning and Usage". The model developed for this study will be referred to as the Human Ecosystem Model.

The relationships between humans, the environment, and their interaction is called the ecosystem. The Human Ecosystem Model presented the individual in relation to three levels of environment: (1) near; (2) intermediate; and (3) distal. In the conceptual model, each level or magnitude of environment encompassed the previous one(s) as they moved from the one nearest to humans, to the intermediate, to the distal. It is important to note, however, that while the model is represented by concentric circles, no level is independent from another, and interactions among any two or more levels occur constantly and in no particular order.

Kilsdonk's (1983) model also proposed three conceptually distinct but

interrelated environments which were superimposed on the levels or magnitudes of environment, and these were: (1) the natural environment; (2) the human constructed environment; and (3) the human behavioral environment.

The adapted Human Ecosystem Model (Figure 3.1) combined the various magnitudes and components of the human environment. It offered a comprehensive framework for discussing economic, environmental, and ethical issues pertaining to the secondhand clothing trade as they related to the multiple human environments. It was important that the total environment be included in view of the significance and complexity of relationships between secondhand clothing and the various environments for the purpose of making appropriate decisions which support an improved quality of life and well-being (Bubolz, Eicher & Sontag, 1979; Bubolz & Sontag, 1988).



1. Near Environment
2. Intermediate Environment
3. Distal Environment

Humans
Clothing

4. Natural & Non-Human Environment
5. Social-Behavioral Environment
6. Human-Built Environment

Figure 3.1 - The Human Ecosystem Model
(Adapted from Kilsdonk's (1983)
The Family and Its Near Environment Related to the
Various Dimensions of the Total Human Environment)

Humans are seen as pivotal in the total ecosystem of the universe, where they interact with multiple magnitudes and components of the environment and each interaction affects the quality of life and human well-being. Clothing is considered part of the near human-built environment which moderates relationships between humans and their physical (natural and human-built) and psychological, social, and cultural (social behavioral) environments. Secondhand clothing represents one component of the clothing environment. The human-built environment is that which is altered or created by humans, and as it relates to secondhand clothing, includes technology (reprocessing strategies) and legal policy (import/export). Social-behavioral environments include education (recycling), economics (supply/demand), cultural and social norms (social messages of clothing, acceptability of secondhand clothing). Natural and non-human environments involve quality of land, air, and water (disposal of textile waste).

Various magnitudes of the environment are also affected by secondhand clothing. Families and households are part of the individual's near environment which influence consumption trends and discard habits affecting secondhand clothing. Organizations involved as retailers, charities, environmental and policy agencies represent intermediate environments involved in processing the clothing. Distal environments as they relate to secondhand clothing include the economic and environmental quality of life in trading nations.

Descriptive Research

This study investigated economic, environmental, and ethical issues relating to the secondhand clothing trade by developing a profile of secondhand clothing organizations and examining their policies and practices relating to the

acquisition of secondhand clothing and the discard of unwanted inventories. The nature of this research, therefore, was descriptive.

Touliatos and Compton (1988) suggested that surveys are useful tools in providing comprehensive quantitative descriptions of the characteristics of things, events, or people. While surveys often help to assess the adequacy or provide justification for current practices, they also serve as the basis for formulating new plans to improve conditions and procedures. All three purposes are relevant to this study.

Self-administered questionnaires offer an effective and efficient method of surveying. They are more economical in cost and time than personal interviews, they allow respondents to consider items carefully, and they facilitate data collection and analysis (Dillman, 1978; Touliatos and Compton, 1988). Warren (1965) added that questionnaires offer a mechanism whereby each respondent supplies information on the same items in a comparable form. Despite many advantages, response rate is a major consideration. Dillman (1978) suggested that to maximize response rate of survey participants, all aspects of the study should be designed to create a positive image. He also indicated follow-up and incentives have been used to improve response rate. He suggested three techniques for improving response rates: (1) minimize costs for responding; (2) maximize the rewards for responding; and (3) establish trust that those rewards will be delivered. Touliatos and Compton (1988) added that an explanation of the groups that are asked to participate and the value of the information they supply should be stressed, and that an offer to share results of the completed study is a further encouragement.

Items in a self-administered questionnaire are of two main types. Closed-

ended questions are those offering a limited number of appropriate responses from which the respondent checks one or more answers from those listed. Closed -ended questions lend themselves to a range of formats including yes/no options, true/false statements, marking points on a scale, or ranking statements in terms of importance. They may also include a provision for respondents to indicate uncertainty or no opinion. Open-ended questions, on the other hand, elicit an answer in the respondent's own words, thus facilitating insight into personal feelings and interests, background, hidden motivation, and so on. While open-ended questions require more effort on the part of the respondent and create challenges for the researcher in coding and tabulation, they are advisable when the range of answers available to the respondent may not be fully anticipated by the researcher (Touliatos and Compton, 1988, Warren, 1965).

Compton and Hall (1972) stated that pretesting is required to ensure the questionnaire is easily understood and elicits the information desired. A pilot study conducted on a small scale with a group similar to those in the major study provides valuable insights for adding questions which may have been overlooked, amending questions which may be ambiguous, or eliminating pointless questions.

Population Survey

The population for this study comprised secondhand clothing organizations in the Edmonton area. The organizations were selected to represent both charity and commercial organizations, but did not include those sponsored as local church or community projects which were deemed to be of a smaller scale or of a temporary nature. A directory of appropriate organizations was compiled by the researcher from a variety of sources:

1. Telephone directories;
2. Newspaper & magazine advertising - classified and promotional;
3. Promotional advertising, including pamphlets and mailers;
4. Educational publications of charity organizations;
5. Networking with researchers, friends and family;
6. Personal scouting and telephoning investigation.

Warren (1965), in discussing community surveys, suggested it is important to delineate larger urban centers by establishing boundaries based on geographic criteria, populations, community characteristics, former studies, or trade areas. Trade areas are classified as retail or wholesale. While retail trade areas are confined to the immediate area surrounding a trade centre from which people come for ordinary retail purchases, wholesale trade areas are larger areas which serve several communities for radio stations, daily newspapers, cultural facilities, hospitals, specialized stores, and other establishments. This survey, because it dealt with 'specialized clothing' not generally offered as ordinary retail merchandise, was delivered to the wholesale trade area for the City of Edmonton which also included the communities of Fort Saskatchewan, St. Albert, Spruce Grove, Sherwood Park, and Leduc. Sixty three secondhand clothing organizations enumerated in the Edmonton area received the survey questionnaire.

Description of the Instrument

This survey took the form of a self-administered questionnaire developed by the researcher (Appendix A). The questionnaire was designed for both charity organizations and commercial enterprises involved in marketing secondhand clothing in order that a profile could be developed. The questionnaire dealt with general characteristics of the organizations, business practices relating to acquisition of secondhand clothing, and business practices relating to disposal of unwanted inventories. A combination of open and closed-ended questions was used for two reasons: (1) to elicit respondents' interest in

options which they may not have previously considered; and (2) to elicit responses not contemplated by the researcher. Some items were patterned after those incorporated in Widney's (1985) Home-Based Sewing Business Owners: Definitive Profiles and Skill Assessment, a project which used a mailed questionnaire to survey respondents in an attempt to obtain descriptive information on interest, need for instruction, and skill level in specific sewing tecniques. Questions were based on literature which was reviewed, informal interviews and discussions with organizations involved in marketing secondhand clothing, as well as discussions with research colleagues.

An ethics review was conducted by the Human Ethics Review Committee at the University of Alberta to ensure the protection of the welfare and dignity of the participants (Appendix B). The questionnaire was pretested by a small sample of operators of secondhand clothing organizations which included both charity and commercial groups to determine clarity of instructions and questions, inclusion of relevant questions, and logical sequence of questions. The pilot test procedure involved scheduling appointments with representatives of six secondhand clothing organizations in the City of Red Deer, an area outside the population survey boundaries. The purpose of the survey was explained and each participant was asked to complete the questionnaire and pose questions or make comments about the types of information requested, clarity of instructions and questions, or other issues. Revisions were made based on results of the pilot testing.

Data Collection

Dillman's (1978) Total Design Method (TDM) detailed physical formatting of survey questionnaire booklets, organization of questions, and implementation

procedures. This questionnaire utilized Dillman's TDM recommendations with a slightly modified 5 1/2" x 8 1/2" booklet accompanied by a one-page cover letter which included the researcher's telephone number. The questionnaires were hand delivered to participants' places of business with a brief introduction of the researcher, explanation of the survey's purpose, and confirmation of pick-up arrangements. One week later the researcher contacted all organizations by telephone, then returned to pick up the questionnaires and thank the respondents for participating. Occasionally, third visits were required.

Questionnaires were coded for identification of the respondents by the researcher. Respondents were assured of complete confidentiality in the treatment of survey data, with only generalized findings made available if requested. Additionally, telephone and fax numbers at which the researcher could be contacted were included in communication with respondents.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version 6.1. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize, organize, and condense data. A profile of the secondhand clothing organizations including inventory acquistion practices and unwanted inventory discard practices was developed using this information.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

This study was undertaken to investigate economic, environmental, and ethical issues relating to the secondhand clothing trade. A description of the survey population and analysis of the variables are included in this chapter. A profile of the secondhand clothing organizations is developed, and their policies and practices regarding the acquisition of secondhand clothing and the discard of unwanted inventories are examined.

Organizational Profile

Description of the Survey Population

The survey questionnaire was delivered personally by the researcher to 74 secondhand clothing outlets in the Edmonton trade area. Ten of these outlets, however, had closed recently or were in the final stages of closing and therefore were not included. Of the remaining 64 organizations, 51 responsed to the questionnaire. Of these, one respondent was disqualified since the organization's only involvement with secondhand clothing was on a rental basis, and rental agencies were not considered appropriate for purposes of this survey. Fifty returned questionnaires were therefore considered useable for this research, for a return rate of 79% (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Municipal Location of Survey Population

Municipal Location	Number of Organizations	Number of Responses	% Responses
Greater Edmonton	50	39	78
Fort Saskatchewan	1	1	100
Leduc	1	1	100
St. Albert	4	4	100
Sherwood Park	2	2	100
Spruce Grove	2	2	100
Stony Plain	3	1	33
Total	63	50	79%

Characteristics of the Organizations

This profile presents numeric or graphic descriptions of the characteristics of secondhand clothing organizations in the Edmonton area. It includes information relating to organizational goals or objectives, the number of retail outlets, amount and type of space they occupy, forms of ownership, types of workers relative to qualifications and duties, business systems, and other information.

In ranking organizational goals or objectives (Table 4.2), 40 of 50 respondents identified the generation of profit as one of three main objectives of their organization, and 30 identified it as their most important objective. Of these 30 profit-oriented organizations, 26 obtained 50% or more of their inventories through consignments and four purchased the majority of their inventories. Social objectives, including providing a social service in the form of

clothing, providing employment and/or skills training, and generating revenue for other social objectives were considered primary objectives by 12 organizations. Other objectives included providing personal satisfaction, generating revenue for the purchase of religious materials, providing clothing for people in need, educating the public regarding recycling, and assisting particular charities.

Table 4.2 Organizational Goals

Goal (N=50)	Most Important f (%)	Second Importance f (%)	Third Importance f (%)	Mean Level of Importance (1-3)*	sd
Generation of profit	30 (60.0)	7 (14.0)	3 (6.0)	2.1	1.2
Providing a social service in the form of clothing	5 (10.0)	15 (30.0)	10 (20.0)	1.1	1.1
Providing employment &/or skills training	2 (4.0)	17 (34.0)	11 (22.0)	1.0	1.0
Generating revenue for other social objectives	5 (10.0)	5 (10.0)	5 (10.0)	.6	1.0
Other	5 (10.0)	2 (4.0)	2 (4.0)	.4	1.0

* Scale: 3 = Most important, 2 = Second importance, 1 = Third importance, 0 = Less/Not important

While 42 of 50 respondents operated only one retail outlet in the Edmonton area, eight were associated with up to five other secondhand outlets in the region. Six respondents are affiliated with between two and six outlets outside the Edmonton area but within Alberta. Six are associated with 3 to 42 Canadian outlets outside the province, and five have 5 to 100 other North American outlets.

Three Edmonton outlets are part of a large chain organization which operates 42 outlets in Canada and 95 to 100 outlets throughout North America. Five prominent charity organizations did not respond to question items relating to Canadian and North American outlets, suggesting these data under-represent the true size of many organizations located in the Edmonton area.

Many outlets are new businesses, with 11 of 47 established in 1994-1995. Another 13 have been in business for less than five years, and 12 have operated for up to ten years. Eleven organizations existed before 1985, with the most senior reporting 40 years of business in Edmonton. It is worth noting that some organizations which have recently opened also indicated that they had purchased existing secondhand clothing outlets whose original inception dates were not reported. Also, ten organizations had recently closed or were in the process of closing and were not included in this survey.

Tenancy arrangements are largely through rental or lease agreements with unrelated organizations, with 37 of the 50 organizations operating in this manner. Seven own their premises, while five rent or lease from a parent organization. Only one organization occupies donated space.

A total of 171,539 sq. ft. of retail space is occupied by Edmonton area respondents, representing a mean in excess of 3,500 sq. ft. (Table 4.3). Retail areas range from 400 to 19,000 sq. ft., with nearly half the respondents occuping between 1000 and 2499 sq. ft. of space.

Business ownership among secondhand clothing outlets in Edmonton is of three main types: formal corporations, sole proprietorships, and non-profit charities (Table 4.3). Others include partnerships, informal and unlicensed businesses, and subsidiaries of religious organizations. None are franchise

Table 4.3 Business Profile

Description	f	%
Physical Size of Retail Outlet* (N=49)		
Less than 1000 sq. ft.	9	18.1
1000 - 2499 sq. ft.	24	48.7
2500 - 4999 sq. ft.	7	14.1
5000 - 9999 sq. ft.	4	8.0
10,000 - 14,999 sq. ft.	1	2.0
15,000 - 19,000 sq. ft.	4	8.1
Business Ownership (N= 50)		
Corporation	15	30.0
Sole proprietorship	14	28.0
Non-profit charity	14	28.0
Partnership	5	10.0
Informal, unlicensed	2	4.0
Franchise	0	0
Other	1	2.0
Inventory Tracking Mechanism** (N=50)		
Garment tag information	28	56.0
Manual recordkeeping	27	54.0
Computers	13	26.0
No formalized procedure	11	22.0
Other	2	4.0
Payment Plans** (N=50)		
Cash	49	98.0
Major credit cards	38	76.0
Cheques	36	72.0
Layaway or installment plans	20	40.0
Direct debit cards	10	20.0
Other	4	8.0
Average Weekly Hours of Retail Operation (N=50)		
Up to 19 hours	0	0
20 - 40 hours	16	32.0
41 - 60 hours	27	54.0
61 - 72 hours	4	8.0
Over 72 hours	3	6.0

* Total space occupied = 171,539 sq. ft.
Mean = 3,500.8 sq. ft.; sd 4,995.6 sq. ft.; range 18,600 sq. ft.

** More than one description may apply.

operations. Of the 30 profit-motivated organizations, 29 are formally organized as sole proprietorships, partnerships, or corporations. Of the remaining 20 respondents, 15 identified themselves as unlicensed, non-profit or church organizations.

Inventory tracking systems vary among organizations (Table 4.3). While most use manual recordkeeping systems and/or garment tag information, many have no formalized system. Of the 13 which use computers to record clothing transactions, four use computers exclusively while others rely on a combination of inventory control systems. Additionally, one respondent reported that the organization's computer program was designed exclusively for their business by a local consultant.

Edmonton outlets use five major payment plans for clothing sales (Table 4.3). Cash sales, not surprisingly, were reported by most organizations, with the single exception being one accepting donated clothing which it then distributes free of charge to needy recipients. Major credit cards and personal cheques are also popular payment methods, with layaway or installment plans and direct debit cards used by fewer organizations. Other exchange media include welfare vouchers, letters of credit, and free distribution. The majority (78%) of organizations employ three or more methods of payment, while 46% use four or more methods.

A number of innovative advertising methods are reported by secondhand clothing operators. While word-of-mouth is the most common method, other popular methods include newspaper advertising, business cards, flyers or posters, and yellow pages advertising (Figure 4.1). Electronic media (radio, TV, computer) and mailing lists are also becoming popular. Other advertising methods include

bridal fairs, fashion shows, community newsletters, signs, and feature articles in newspapers. As with methods of payment, most organizations employ several methods with 70% using four or more methods, 40% using five or more, 22% using six or more, 8% using seven or more, and 4% using eight methods.

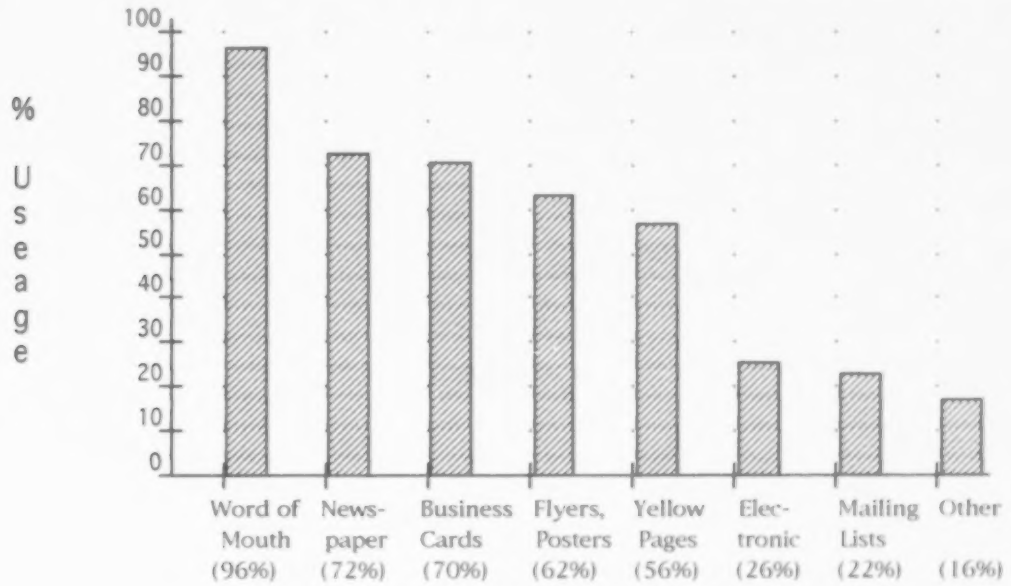


Figure 4.1 Advertising Methods

While operational functions such as inventory acquisition, distribution, and discard are often simpler to report, other aspects of operating secondhand clothing businesses are equally important. When asked about their current effectiveness in other administrative areas, respondents identified a number of perceived strengths and weaknesses (Table 4.4). The area in which most organizations indicated a need for additional information or training is marketing and sales, followed by financial planning. Moderate needs were reported in recordkeeping, insurance/licenses/taxation, inventory acquisition, and clothing discard procedures.

Table 4.4 Organizational Effectiveness/Needs Assessment

Administrative Function	Most Needed f (%)		Somewhat Needed f (%)	f (%)	Not Needed f (%)	Mean Level of Need (1-5)*	sd
Marketing/Sales (N=42)	17 (40.5)	5 (11.9)	11 (26.2)	2 (4.8)	7 (16.7)	3.5	1.5
Financial Planning (N=39)	11 (28.2)	7 (17.9)	8 (20.5)	2 (5.1)	11 (28.2)	3.1	1.6
Recordkeeping (N=40)	9 (22.5)	3 (7.5)	4 (10.0)	5 (12.5)	19 (47.5)	2.5	1.7
Inventory Acquisition (N=37)	5 (13.5)	3 (8.1)	9 (24.3)	6 (16.2)	14 (37.8)	2.4	1.4
Insurance, Licenses, Taxation (N=39)	5 (12.8)	4 (10.3)	7 (17.9)	6 (15.4)	17 (43.6)	2.3	1.5
Inventory Discard (N=39)	5 (12.8)	3 (7.7)	6 (15.4)	5 (12.8)	20 (51.3)	2.2	1.5

*Scale: 5 = Most Needed, 4 = Somewhat+ Needed, 3 = Somewhat Needed
2 = Somewhat- Needed, 1 = Not Needed

A total of 583 people work in Edmonton area outlets either in a full-time or part-time paid capacity, or on an unpaid volunteer basis (Table 4.5). While most employ only one full-time employee, others employ up to 34 full-time workers. A total of 115 part-time staff are employed by 37 organizations. While over half of the respondents do not utilize volunteer services, there are 296 volunteers working with the remaining respondents.

These workers have diverse backgrounds and perform a variety of tasks. While volunteers often have no specific requisite qualifications, part-time employees often are expected to have a high school education and/or general retail experience, and full-time employees are frequently required to have high

Table 4.5 Employee Profile

Description	Full-time		Part-time		Volunteer	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Number of Workers		N=49		N=47		N=46
None (0)	4	8.2	10	21.3	25	54.3
One (1)	25	51.0	11	23.4	3	6.5
Two (2)	10	20.4	10	21.3	3	6.5
Three - Ten (3-10)	7	14.2	16	34.1	10	21.8
Over ten (10+)	3	6.1	0	0	5	10.9
Total Workers:	172		115		296	
Preferred Education/Training/Experience* (N=45)						
No qualifications specified	5	11.1	7	15.6	15	33.3
High school education	14	31.1	15	33.3	4	8.9
Post secondary education	8	17.8	5	11.1	0	0
Formal retail training	12	26.7	3	6.7	1	2.0
General retail experience	24	53.3	25	55.6	8	17.8
Experience with organization	4	8.9	2	4.4	2	4.4
Other	6	13.3	5	11.1	1	2.2
Employee/Volunteer Training Programs* (N=40)						
Evaluate/accept inventory	31	77.5	25	62.5	8	20.0
Sort, repair, clean inventory	23	57.5	17	42.5	10	25.0
Display merchandise	30	75.0	27	67.5	16	40.0
Regular pricing	30	75.0	21	52.5	6	15.0
Discounting, markdowns, sale pricing	28	70.0	19	47.5	6	15.0
Retail sales/customer relations	31	77.5	31	77.5	7	17.5
Clerical/administration	19	47.5	11	27.5	2	5.0
Discard unwanted inventory	27	67.5	22	55.0	12	30.0
Other	1	2.5	2	5.0	0	0

* More than one description may apply.

school/post-secondary education, and/or formal retail training (Table 4.5). Other qualifications identified were religious membership, common sense, personal 'fit' between the individual and the organization, fashion consciousness, computer experience, and at least a Grade 10 education.

Training for employees includes a variety of tasks or functions which differ among organizations but are likely related to the employment status of the worker. Full-time employees are frequently trained to deal with customers and sell merchandise, and to evaluate and accept incoming inventory. Most are also trained to display inventory and price merchandise, discount prices for sales or special events, discard unwanted inventory, and sort/repair/clean inventory. Clerical or administrative training for full-time employees is done by fewer than half the respondents. Training for part-time workers is often in areas of retail sales and customer relations, displaying merchandise, and accepting inventory. Volunteers are less likely to be trained in all areas. Less than half the respondents establish training for volunteers in displaying merchandise and discarding inventory, and even fewer are involved in retail sales, regular pricing, discount pricing, and office administration. While other training areas for volunteers were not specified, respondents indicated training full-time and part-time workers in clean-up and general help, and possibly these are areas in which volunteer services are utilized as well.

In 48 organizations, 40 senior administrators are female, six are male, and two organizations have males and females sharing the role. Hours of retail operation range from 20 hours to over 72 hours per week, with most operating between 41 to 60 hours (Table 4.3).

Policies & Practices Relating to Acquisition of Secondhand Clothing

Edmonton respondents acquire secondhand clothing in three main ways: consignments, donations, and purchases (Figure 4.2). Consignments are the sole acquisition method used by 16 of 50 organizations, while an additional 13 rely on this method for more than 50% of their inventory, and 19 handle no consignment clothing. While donations are the sole acquisition method for 12 organizations, 33 handle no donated clothing. While an average of only 15% of respondents' inventories is purchased, this method is used by 21 respondents for some portion of their inventory, and four rely exclusively on purchases. The respondents who purchase all of their inventory include some of the largest in terms of numbers of outlets, number of employees, and the physical size of outlets. Sources or suppliers for these organizations include garage sales, auctions, and contract agencies which procure and re-sell used clothing. Contract agencies are those which solicit secondhand clothing via telephone, collect the clothing via residential pick-up, and re-sell it for the purpose of generating income to support other social objectives. Only one organization, a men's specialty outlet marketing military uniforms, reported importing secondhand clothing.

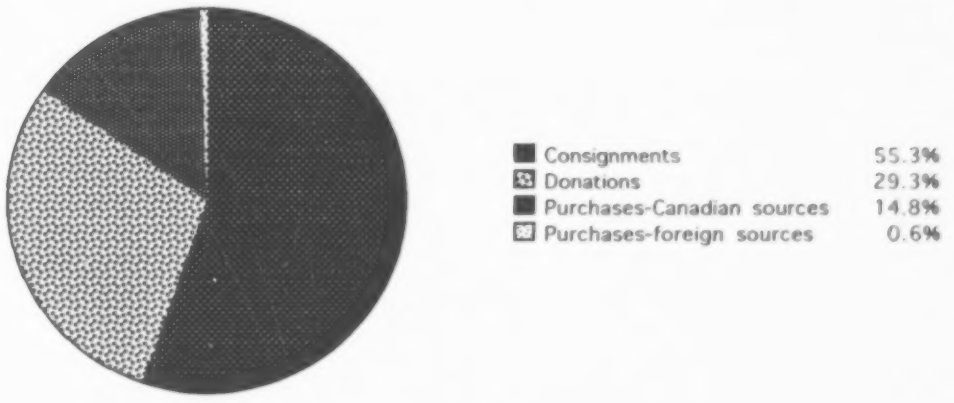


Figure 4.2 Clothing Acquisition Methods

Most used clothing reaches secondhand outlets through personal delivery by the householder to the organization's place of business (Table 4.6), with 30 of 50 respondents using this method exclusively, and an additional 13 relying on it for 50% or more of their inventory. Residential pick-up is used by 14 respondents for 1% to 90% of their inventory. Drop-off bins situated in central locations are used by only two respondents to supplement other delivery methods. Three respondents who acquire clothing from contract agencies rely on truckload deliveries almost exclusively for inventory supplies.

Table 4.6 Clothing Delivery Methods & Procedures

Description	Mean % of Respondents' Inventories	sd	Range
Delivery Method (N=50)			
Delivery by householder	86	30.3	100.0
Residential pick-up	7	19.4	90.0
Central drop-off location	1	5.8	40.0
Other	6	22.9	98.0
Number of Articles Acquired per Delivery (N=49)			
Less than 12 items	31	30.3	100.0
13 - 24 items	32	25.5	85.0
25 - 50 items	24	26.6	100.0
Other	12	30.3	100.0

Respondents generally receive clothing in large quantities, often in bundles or packages. While single item acquisitions were not reported in the data, four of the five respondents who received more than 90% of their inventories in quantities of less than 12 items also carry specialty clothing (bridal, men's formal) (Table 4.6). Large deliveries can include up to 200 items, and occasionally clothing is received by truckloads.

Various types of secondhand clothing are found in Edmonton area outlets (Figure 4.3). Ladies' casual and business wear is the predominant type with 37 of 50 respondents handling between 5% and 100% of their inventory as this type of attire. Children's wear is handled by 31 respondents, with 12 indicating it comprises more than 50% of their inventory. While ladies' specialty wear, including bridal, formal, maternity, and uniforms, averages only 11% of inventories, it is handled by 30 respondents. Three of these deal almost exclusively in specialty bridal or maternity wear, with the balance carrying 3% to 25% of their inventories as specialty clothing. Similarly, men's business wear, although carried by 23 respondents, averages only 12% of inventories. Men's specialty or formal wear is carried by nine respondents but averages only 1% of inventories. Clothing designated as unisex is carried by 16 respondents and averages 4% of inventories. Other types of clothing include vintage, accessories, shoes, and military uniforms.

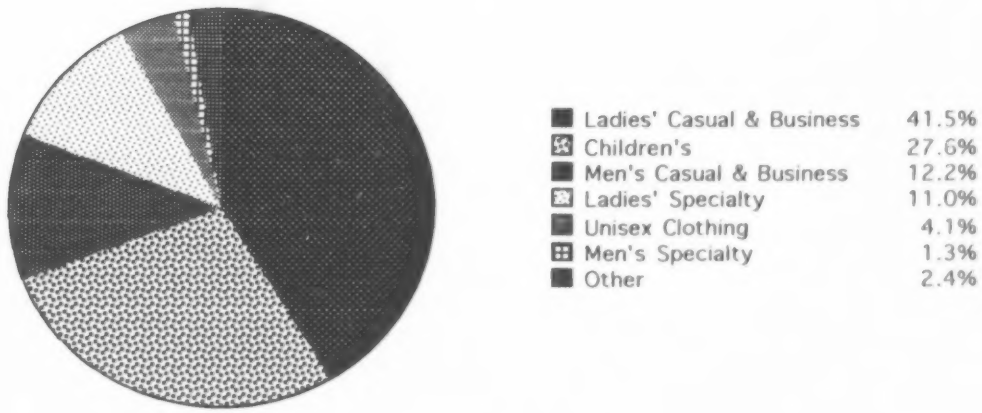


Figure 4.3 Types of Secondhand Clothing

Word-of-mouth, newspaper advertising, and newsletters or flyers are the three main methods of soliciting secondhand clothing. A number of other methods are identified, however, and are categorized as print or non-print forms of solicitation in Table 4.7. Most respondents use a combination of solicitation methods, with 46% using three or more methods and only 8% limiting themselves to one method.

Certain clothing which reaches secondhand organizations is not acceptable as active inventory. This clothing is rejected on initial inspection and is either returned to the original owner or donor or is discarded in some other way. The proportion of clothing received which is rejected ranges between 5% and 80% and averages 27% of inventories. The primary reason for rejection relates to the condition of the clothing (Table 4.7). Soiled and/or damaged items are unacceptable to nearly all respondents, with out-of-style and out-of-season clothing also being rejected by the majority. Much clothing is rejected based on type. For example, ladies' business wear may be rejected by a bridal shop. Other reasons for rejection relate to an organization's quest for specific brands or designer/manufacturer labels, excessive wear visible on a garment, and poor or no pressing. Only 4% of respondents reported utilizing all secondhand clothing which was acquired.

Many respondents engage in various types of processing before clothing is displayed or distributed (Table 4.7). Laundering and pressing or steaming are the most prevalent activities, followed by dry cleaning, spot cleaning, and mending. Other preparation services include sizing, hanging, visual checks for pressing, as well as paperwork. Of 50 respondents, 36 use a combination of processing strategies, displaying some clothing "as is" and processing other

Table 4.7 Policies & Practices Relating to Clothing Acquisition

Description	f	%
Solicitation Methods* (N=50)		
(Print Methods)		
Newspaper advertisements	31	62.0
Newsletters	25	50.0
Postcards	2	4.0
Specialty directories	1	2.0
Community newsletters	1	2.0
(Non-Print Methods)		
Word of mouth	45	90.0
Telephone solicitation	3	6.0
Drop-off bins	2	4.0
Contract agencies	3	6.0
Bridal Fairs/Fashion Shows	2	4.0
Personal contact	1	2.0
Radio	1	2.0
Portable signs	1	2.0
Public bids	1	2.0
Retail stores	1	2.0
Clothing Types Which are Unacceptable* (N=48)		
Soiled and/or damaged apparel	46	95.8
Out-of-style apparel	32	66.7
Out-of-season apparel	27	56.3
Inappropriate type of apparel	17	35.4
Lower quality/manufacturing label	10	20.8
Other	5	10.4
Processing Acceptable Clothing* (N=50)		
No processing, displayed "as is"	36	72.0
Pressing or steaming	22 **	44.0
Laundering	19	38.0
Dry cleaning	12	24.0
Mending	12	24.0
Spot cleaning	10 **	20.0
Other	8	16.0
Retail Selling Prices - established by:* (N=50)		
Management or employees of organization	46	92.0
Consignor/management consultation	9	18.0
Consignor alone	0	0
Other	2	4.0

* More than one description may apply.
** Some organizations charge for these services.

items. While 13 respondents perform three or more processing activities, 21 do no processing.

Retail pricing of secondhand clothing is established primarly by management or employees of the organization (Table 4.7). While no respondents price clothing based on a consignor's wishes alone, consultation occurs between consignors and management in 18% of organizations. Another method of pricing is through review by a pricing committee.

Two important factors influencing retail pricing relate to the condition of the clothing and comparisons with the price of new clothing (Table 4.8). Less important influences include comparisons with prices of other secondhand organizations, profit maximization, customer demand, availability or supply, negotiations with consignors, and customer circumstances or resources.

The amount of secondhand clothing handled by Edmonton organizations is difficult to estimate, with only 22 of 50 respondents attempting to quantify the weight or number of articles acquired per year. Further, five of those who did not respond were considered among the largest in terms of number of employees, number of outlets, and physical space occupied. Also, the 22 estimates represented a variety of reporting methods, including imperial (pounds) and metric (kilograms) measures, number of articles counted individually, and number of plastic bags containing numerous articles. As well, some organizations indicated they purchase by truckload and cannot estimate quantity. Several organizations indicated they have not been open a full year and are unable to estimate their annual acquisitions. Other comments are worth noting:

"Average weight per bag ~ 25 lb."
"Average # bags = 15/wk. x 52 wk./yr."
"Approximately 50 garbage bags a week"
"Don't know"

Table 4.8 Factors Influencing Retail Pricing

Factor (N=49)	Most Important f (%)	Second Importance f (%)	Third Importance f (%)	Median Importance (0-3)	Range
Condition of garment	12 (24.5)	20 (40.8)	6 (12.2)	2	0-3
Comparisons with new clothing	16 (32.7)	13 (26.5)	5 (10.2)	2	0-3
Comparisons with other secondhand organizations	2 (4.1)	4 (8.2)	4 (8.2)	0	0-3
ofit maximization	3 (6.1)	3 (6.1)	3 (6.1)	0	0-3
Customer demand	1 (2.0)	3 (6.1)	8 (16.3)	0	0-3
Availability or supply	1 (2.0)	4 (8.2)	1 (2.0)	0	0-3
Negotiations with consignors	0 (0)	3 (6.1)	3 (6.1)	0	0-2
Customer need/resources	2 (4.1)	2 (4.1)	2 (4.1)	0	0-3
Covering costs	0 (0)	2 (4.1)	0 (0)	0	0-2
Other	3 (6.1)	3 (6.1)	1 (2.0)	0	0-3

*Scale: 3=Most important, 2=Second importance, 1=Third importance, 0=Less/not important

Note: While N=49, response discrepancies necessitated coding adjustments, so that multiple 1's, 2's, 3's , or other markings, were all coded as 2's. Where respondents assigned equal importance to more than 3 factors, only the first 3 choices were coded as 2's.

"I have no idea"
"Difficult to even estimate"
"Works by seasons"
"Have never had time to calculate"
"Varies, not able to reply"

In an effort to standardize reporting methods, the researcher experimented with various clothing articles to establish a working conversion scale. A number of adult clothing articles were placed in a 24" x 36" plastic refuse bag and weighed. The articles included such items as jeans, sweat suits, blouses, shirts, T-shirts, and shorts. They did not include children's wear, coats and other outerwear, or underwear. It was determined that approximately 35 items fill one refuse bag and weigh 9.08 kg. or 20 lb. Each item, therefore, weighs an average of .57 lb. or .26 kg. Based on these conversions, the survey results indicate that 1,804,376 kg. of secondhand clothing, or just under 7 million articles of apparel, are processed each year by 22 Edmonton area respondents (Table 4.9).

Table 4.9 Amount of Clothing Acquired

Reporting Method	Estimated Number of Articles	Estimated Weight (lb.)	Estimated Weight (kg.)	Equivalent Weight* (kg.)
Individual Articles (N=15)	1,817,600			= 472,576
Weight (kg.) (N=3)			1,041,800	= 1,041,800
Weight (lb.) (N=4)		638,000		= 290,000
Total (N=22)**	1,817,600 articles	+ 638,000 lb.	+ 1,041,800 kg.	= 1,804,376 kg.

* Conversion Scale: 1 bag = 35 items = 9.08 kg.
** Annual Mean = 82,017 kg./organization
or 315,390 articles/organization

While many respondents found it difficult to quantify annual clothing acquisitions, most were able to estimate peak months of the year for acquisitions and discards. The amount of clothing processed appears to fluctuate significantly throughout the year (Table 4.10), with the highest activity occurring during the spring and early autumn. Acquisitions are highest for approximately 50% of the respondents in March-April-May and August-September-October. September is the single peak month for acquisitions for 30 of 50 respondents. The slowest period appears to be December-January-February. Twenty-one respondents reported acquiring approximately equal amounts of clothing each month throughout the year. Peak periods for discards are discussed in the following section.

Table 4.10 Peak Months for Acquisitions & Discards

Peak Month*	Acquisitions f	Acquisitions % (N = 40)	Discards f	Discards % (N = 42)
January	1	2.5	2	4.8
February	2	5.0	4	9.5
March	22	55.0	10	23.8
April	23	57.5	7	16.7
May	20	50.0	6	14.3
June	11	27.5	7	16.7
July	10	25.0	5	11.9
August	17	42.5	10	23.8
September	30	75.0	9	21.4
October	22	55.0	9	21.4
November	11	27.5	4	9.5
December	3	7.5	5	11.9
Equal Amounts Each Month	4	10.0	21	50.0

* Multiple months may apply.

Policies & Practices Relating to the Discard of Unwanted Inventories

Secondhand clothing which is not distributed or sold and which organizations wish to remove from active inventory is discarded in a number of ways. Of 49 responses, 29 discard unwanted clothing by returning it to the consignor (Figure 4.4). These are the same respondents who acquire inventory through consignments (Figure 4.2). Donating to another organization, often a charity or socially-oriented agency, is another popular method used by 38 respondents for portions of their inventory ranging from 1% to 100%. While imports are the acquisition method for only 1% of inventories, and for only one respondent, approximately 9% of inventories are discarded through exports. This is done by six respondents who dispose of between 50% and 100% of their unsold inventories this way. Another 8% of discards are sold to intermediary organizations which purchase them for reprocessing or export. Nearly 6% of discards are directed to landfills as solid waste. Smaller amounts are reprocessed into such items as wipe rags and craft materials, or discarded by re-distribution to other outlets or allocations for staff use.

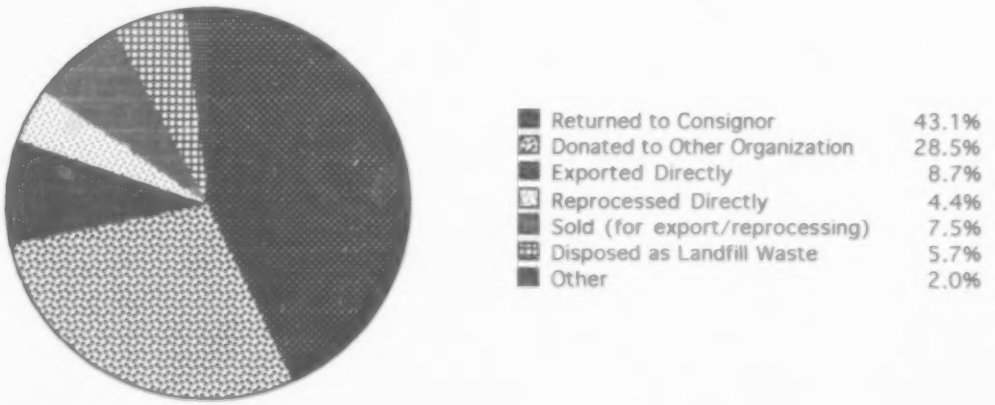


Figure 4.4 Clothing Discard Methods

Not all discard methods are well understood by respondents (Table 4.11). Consignments are the best understood method with most respondents indicating they fully understand this practice and very few reporting they had no knowledge of it. While most felt they had an adequate or better knowledge of organizations which accept donations, many were not aware of organizations which purchase discards either for resale, reprocessing, or export. Responses indicated only a moderate understanding of disposal through landfill, with many indicating they had no knowledge in this area.

Table 4.11 Knowledge of Discard Methods

Discard Method	(5) Complete Knowledge f (%)	(4) f (%)	(3) Adequate Knowledge f (%)	(2) f (%)	(1) No Knowledge f (%)	Mean Level of Knowledge (1-5)	sd
Consignments (N=44)	36 (81.8)	1 (2.3)	3 (6.8)	0 (0)	4 (9.1)	4.5	1.2
Organizations which accept donations (N=46)	25 (54.3)	9 (19.6)	7 (15.2)	1 (2.2)	4 (8.7)	4.1	1.3
Disposal to landfill (N=42)	15 (35.7)	4 (9.5)	7 (16.7)	2 (4.8)	14 (33.3)	3.1	1.7
Organizations which purchase discards (N=45)	12 (26.7)	3 (6.7)	9 (20.0)	7 (15.6)	14 (31.1)	2.8	1.6

A number of factors influence the discard practices of secondhand organizations, including the length of time clothing is in active inventory, the number of price markdowns permitted for individual items, as well as organizational goals, administrative considerations, and clothing characteristics (Table 4.12). Many respondents formalize policies for retention periods of

secondhand clothing based on time in active inventory or on the number of markdowns it has sustained. Where inventory periods are the criteria, the mean retention period is 2.5 months. Where respondents consider markdowns, they average 1.6 markdowns before discard. Only one respondent, a ladies' specialty (bridal) outlet, has a no-markdown policy and uses single pricing instead. Discard policies which specify both time in inventory and number of markdowns are used by 49% of respondents. Few respondents have no policy for either criteria. An additional 43% use other factors, such as markdowns based on percent of retail price (e.g., maximum discounts of 50% of original price, or 25% discounts at 30-day intervals for 3 months), in-store promotions, seasonal nature of clothing, and longer retention for exceptional quality clothing.

While most respondents have policies relating timing or markdowns to discards, other factors which may not be formalized also play critical roles. Organizational goals and administrative factors also influence discard practices, and clothing characteristics appear to have an even greater impact on discard decisions (Table 4.12). Of 15 factors itemized under the three broad criteria, clothing condition was cited by most respondents as the single most important factor affecting discard practices. The desire to help other organizations, protecting the environment, legal obligations related to consignment contracts, overall profitability, storage capacity, the convenience of a particular method, time in inventory, and garment style, together were chosen by 52% of respondents as their main consideration in discarding. Other discard factors include inappropriate types of clothing (e.g., ladies' casual wear in a bridal outlet), the consignor's request, and lack of demand for specific items.

Table 4.12 Clothing Discard Policies & Practices

Factor Influencing Discard	f	%
Length of Time Clothing is Retained in Inventory* (N=49)		
No policy in effect regarding retention period	14	28.6
Policy outlines retention period**	32	65.3
Other timing factors influence retention period	7	14.3
Number of Markdowns Prior to Discard* (N=49)		
No policy in effect regarding markdowns	15	30.6
Policy states no markdowns	1	2.0
Policy states number of markdowns allowed***	20	40.8
Other factors influence markdowns	14	28.6
Single Most Important Discard Factor (N=41)		
Organizational Goals:		
Assisting other organizations	4	9.8
Protecting the environment	3	7.3
Legal obligations	2	4.9
Maximizing profit	2	4.9
Administrative Considerations:		
Storage capacity	4	9.8
Convenience/expediency	2	4.9
Time in inventory	1	2.4
Number of pricing markdowns	0	0
Maintaining lowest cost	0	0
Clothing Characteristics:		
Condition	19	38.0
Out-of-style apparel	1	2.4
Out-of season apparel	0	0
Fiber content	0	0
Quality/Label	0	0
Other:	3	6.0

* More than one description may apply.
** Mean retention period = 2.5 months.
*** Average number of markdowns = 1.6.

In separate ratings of the relative importance of the 15 discard factors (Table 4.13), condition of garment again was reported to be the most important, followed by assisting organizations, storage capacity, and cost. Storage capacity and cost were also rated second in the previous reporting of the single most important factor. While a clothing-related factor (condition of garment) rated highest in both question items, clothing factors in general were more likely to be rated lower in importance than were organizational and administrative factors.

Discard policies and practices have not altered significantly over the past five years, with 84% of respondents continuing with the same method(s). The volume of clothing discarded as unwanted inventory ranges from 5% to 60% of incoming clothing, with the average being 25%. Like acquisitions, discards are lowest in January-February, and are highest in March, and August-September-October (Figure 4.5). However, there is less monthly fluctation respecting discards, and 50% of respondents report equal amounts of discards each month.

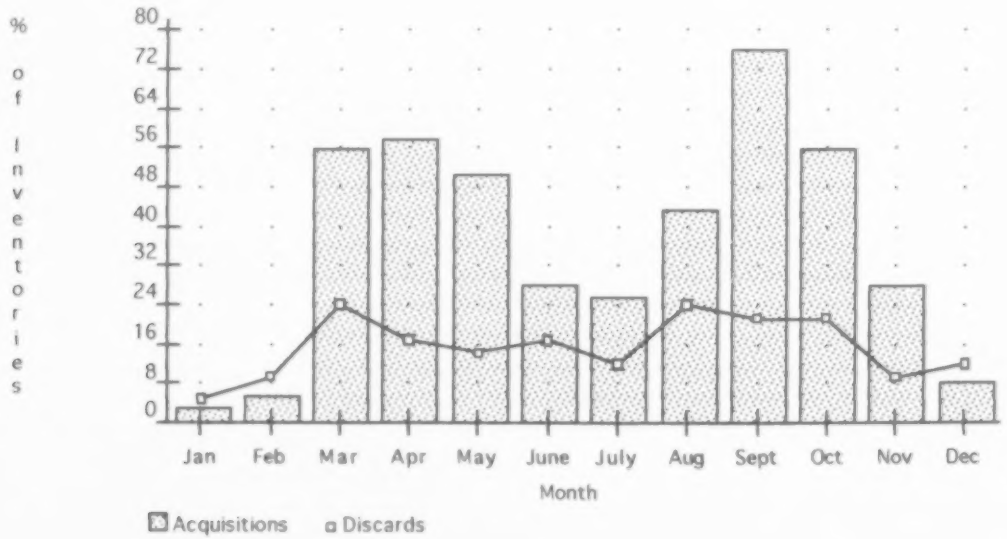


Figure 4.5 Comparison of Peak Months for Acquisitions & Discards

Table 4.13 Factors Influencing Discard Methods

Discard Factor	(5) Most Important f (%)	(4)	(3) Somewhat Important f (%)	(2)	(1) Not Important f (%)	(1-5) Median Importance	Range
ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS:							
Protect environment (N=44)	21 (47.7)	13 (29.5)	7 (15.9)	0 (0)	3 (6.8)	4	1-5
Assist organizations (N=47)	27 (57.4)	3 (6.4)	8 (17.0)	2 (4.3)	7 (14.9)	5	1-5
Legal obligations (N=44)	21 (47.7)	5 (11.4)	3 (6.8)	1 (2.3)	14 (31.8)	4	1-5
Maximizing profit (N=44)	15 (34.1)	6 (13.6)	8 (18.2)	2 (4.5)	13 (29.5)	3	1-5
ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS:							
Storage capacity (N=45)	26 (57.8)	9 (20.0)	6 (13.3)	1 (2.2)	3 (6.7)	5	1-5
Lowest cost (N=43)	22 (51.2)	6 (14.0)	8 (18.6)	2 (4.7)	5 (11.6)	5	1-5
Convenience (N=43)	19 (44.2)	8 (18.6)	9 (20.9)	5 (11.6)	2 (4.7)	4	1-5
Time in inventory (N=44)	13 (29.5)	9 (20.5)	11 (25.0)	6 (13.6)	5 (11.4)	5	1-3
Pricing markdowns (N=43)	7 (16.3)	7 (16.3)	12 (27.9)	6 (14.0)	11 (25.6)	3	1-5
CLOTHING RELATED FACTORS:							
Condition (N=44)	34 (77.3)	4 (9.1)	3 (6.8)	0 (0)	3 (6.8)	5	1-5
Out-of-style (N=46)	21 (45.7)	4 (8.7)	8 (17.4)	4 (8.7)	9 (19.6)	4	1-5
Out-of season (N=44)	14 (31.8)	9 (20.5)	9 (20.5)	1 (2.3)	11 (25.0)	4	1-5
Quality/Label (N=44)	7 (15.9)	5 (11.4)	11 (25.0)	6 (13.6)	15 (34.1)	3	1-5
Fiber content (N=45)	5 (11.1)	4 (8.9)	12 (26.7)	10 (22.2)	14 (31.1)	4	1-5

In comparing discard trends over the past five years, the majority of respondents (58%) believe that similar amounts are currently being discarded by organizations, with 24% suggesting more was discarded in the past, and 19% sugggesting less was discarded. Predictions for the future suggest a shift toward fewer discards with 45% predicting less, 34% indicating amounts will likely be unchanged, and only 20% believing amounts will increase.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

This chapter will discuss research results contained in the previous chapter. These results are examined in relation to each of the four objectives of the study and, where appropriate, to related literature.

Organizational Profile

The first objective was to develop a profile of secondhand clothing organizations which included the characteristics of the organizations and their policies and practices relating to acquistion and discard of secondhand clothing. In this regard, the study yielded an organizational profile that supported some areas of previous research and popular literature and confronted other areas.

Trends in Clothing Consumption

To fully understand the magnitude of the secondhand clothing trade, one must understand the trends in clothing consumption generally, and specifically, those relating to secondhand clothing. Such trends would include a number of environmental factors including socio-economic, demographic, and lifestyle variables. While a number of American researchers have addressed relationships between clothing trends and these variables, the Canadian market is documented to be somewhat unique with respect to social, demographic, and geographic and climatic variations (Crowle, Fedorak & Burwell, 1982; Frisbee, 1985; Nielsen, 1978), and there is limited recent information regarding Canadian trends in clothing consumption.

An Overview of the Secondhand Clothing Trade

The literature suggested that historically secondhand clothing has met a

variety of needs of a great number of people and continues to do so. The number of organizations in the Edmonton area and their economic impact supports the literature in terms of the current significance of the trade. The existence of 63 secondhand clothing organizations in a city of competitive clothing retailers and one of the world's largest shopping malls suggests that secondhand merchandise continues to fill a unique niche in the clothing market. Findings relating to the broader network of secondhand organizations further supports their significance. Many Edmonton area organizations are affiliated with other outlets not only within the city and province, but across Canada and throughout North America as well.

Research indicated the trade in secondhand clothing in Britain dates back to the 1500s, and in the United States and Canada social agencies established secondhand outlets at the turn of the century. In the Edmonton area, 47 respondents have operated for an average of less than seven years with nearly 25% operating for less than two years. However, many organizations have operated for over ten years, and one has been open since post-World War II. These findings, as well as the fact that at least ten organizations had recently closed and were not included in this study, suggest high turnover and/or short longevity of the business entities and may indicate that secondhand clothing organizations are a relatively new and/or unstable phenomenon in this area.

There are basically two types of secondhand clothing organizations which operate in the Edmonton area: profit-oriented or commercial organizations and socially-motivated or charity organizations. While secondhand clothing traditionally has been associated with charity recipients and social service organizations, the majority of Edmonton respondents are profit-oriented.

Economic Implications of the Secondhand Clothing Trade

Edmonton area organizations employ nearly 600 workers to perform a variety of tasks. While hiring qualifications range from minimal education and/or experience to post-secondary education with extensive training and experience, many organizations also provide employee training in the many retail functions they perform.

Edmonton area respondents occupy in excess of 170,000 sq. ft. of retail space. The average size of 49 secondhand clothing outlets is 3500 sq. ft., an area comparable to high traffic convenience stores, with the largest space of 19,000 sq. ft. comparing to a large superstore outlet. Most respondents rent or lease space from unrelated organizations. In view of the relatively low average number of years of business experience of respondents, and possibly high turnover within the industry, rental or lease arrangements may offer lower short-term financial commitments and may allow quicker response to changes in space requirements. The outlets are situated in scattered locations which include downtown and trendy shopping districts, lower-income inner city communities, and suburban malls and plazas. These findings suggest that Edmonton area businesses are similar to those described in recent press articles in other large centers across Canada and the United States with respect to size and location of premises as well as in their tenancy arrangements.

While expenditures relating to advertising were not explored, fourteen methods of advertising were identified. These methods include a variety of media including print, electronic, fashion shows, and word of mouth. It can be assumed that, with the exception of word of mouth, all methods involve advertising expenditures and affect other businesses and the economy as a whole.

Historical research showed that secondhand clothing traders satisfied the

needs of a diverse group of clients partly through payment strategies which were not generally available for purchases of new clothing. This study indicates that Edmonton respondents continue to accommodate clients whose needs may not be addressed by other types of outlets through the use of alternative payment plans. Like most clothing retailers, many respondents accept cash, major credit cards, and cheques. However, many also accommodate layaways, welfare vouchers, letters of credit, and free distribution as alternatives which may not be available in other retail outlets.

Literature suggested that the early secondhand clothing trade operated informally, without leaving records of the trade. More recent research indicated that much overseas trading remains informal, and in certain countries it is declared illegal. Most Edmonton area businesses, however, are formally organized as corporations or sole propriertorships. This would imply they adhere to requirements of federal, provincial, and local reporting agencies on such issues as tax and licensing, and therefore maintain detailed records of their operations. Recent articles described franchise networks as a form of secondhand clothing operations in the United States. However, Edmonton respondents, despite affiliations with large numbers of related organizations, report no franchise operations.

Other economic implications include the import and export of secondhand clothing. Statistics Canada values imported worn textiles and clothing at approximately $10,000,000 per year. This study includes one respondent who imports used military uniforms for re-sale in their Edmonton outlet. Exports of secondhand merchandise leaving Canada are valued at approximately $27,500,000. This study confirms export activity accounts for up to 16% of

respondents' discarded inventories.

Acquisition Policies and Practices

Much of the research on secondhand clothing related to household discard practices, and suggests households frequently discard used clothing in a non-remunerative manner and often to charity organizations. This study found, however, that most respondents were profit-motivated organizations which relied heavily on consignments rather than charity organizations which relied on household donations. This may be because consignments facilitate greater control over quality and volume of clothing acquisitions. However, consignments are not the preferred acquisition method for socially-oriented organizations despite the potential for generating revenue which could be used for other objectives. Instead,these organizations rely heavily on donations for their inventory supplies. Imports are another source of inventory, and while the value of Canada's imports of worn clothing and textiles is reported to be $10,000,000, only one Edmonton respondent reports acquiring inventory this way.

A heavy reliance on personal delivery is not surprising since most respondents are consignment-based and require an agreement or contract which can be executed at the time of delivery. Several large commerial organizations purchase secondhand clothing in truckload volumes from contract agencies, as was indicated in media reports. The literature also suggested there is an international trend for charity agencies to abolish acquisition via bins due to increased vandalism and theft from the containers. Survey results confirm this trend, in that most charity respondents rely on personal delivery of donated items and only a few utilize the oversize receptacles for relatively small percentages of their clothing inventories.

Early research indicated the largest amount of Canadian clothing expenditures was for children, followed by female adults, then male adults (Nielsen, 1978). More recent reports suggested, however, that charity outlets receive more ladies' wear than any other type of apparel (Francis, Butler, McDonald & Turnbow, 1990). Findings of this study confirm its popularity, with 42% of inventories being allocated as ladies' casual and business attire and an additional 11% as ladies' specialty wear. Children's wear is second, comprising 28% of inventories. Whether these figures relate to changes in household clothing consumption and/or discard practices, to specific clothing-related factors, or to other factors is an issue for further study.

Historical research suggested prices of secondhand merchandise were often based on the price of new clothing. This study confirms such comparisons continue to be important but condition of the garment is the single most important factor in pricing used clothing. Most respondents report that prices are established by management of the organization. However, because most inventory is consignment-based, it is somewhat surprising that consultative pricing is an infrequent practice, particularly since most consignors personally deliver their clothing articles to the organization and presumably discuss various other issues at that time. This issue is perhaps one which influences household discard decisions and, of course, the organization's potential to attract greater volumes of clothing.

Despite the use of formal inventory systems by most respondents, many could not estimate the amount of secondhand clothing processed by their organization. This contradiction may relate to inadequate or inappropriate systems, or it may relate to a reluctance of organizations to reveal this

information. If it relates to inadequate systems, it may also relate to the needs expressed by organizations in areas of marketing and sales, financial planning, recordkeeping, and inventory acquisition and discard procedures. From a broader industry perspective, the difficulty in reporting inventory at the organizational level may also explain the approximations and/or variations in the literature respecting quantities of clothing being donated to other organizations, being reprocessed, or going to landfills.

Literature suggested that a major factor in determining potential inventory relates to household discard practices. While discard habits have been researched for other geographic areas, literature relating to Edmonton is limited to estimates of the quantity of textile waste in landfills and this amount is not broken down as household waste versus industrial waste. Further, literature suggested consumption trends vary by region within Canada. It is possible that household discard habits also vary by region. If this is the case, an analysis of discard habits in the same geographic area would provide critical information regarding potential inventories available to Edmonton organizations as well as provide insights regarding solicitation methods which would most effectively elicit that inventory.

Discard Policies and Practices

The predominant discard method of Edmonton area respondents is by returning clothing to consignors. This finding coincides with the proportion of organizations which acquire inventories that way. Donating to other organizations represents the second most popular discard method. This suggests that Butler and Francis' (1993) findings regarding non-remunerative disposal patterns of households may apply to organizations as well. Media reports

suggested that vast quantities of discarded clothing are being exported overseas. Statistics Canada data attached a large monetary value to exports of worn clothing and textiles. Results of this study confirm that re-sale for export or reprocessing is the third most popular method of disposal, with up to 16% of inventories being disposed of in this way.

Literature suggested that household discard practices regarding clothing are complex and may not be related to discard practices for other items. Personal characteristics and values, social and psychological variables, and garment-related factors have been shown to influence household discards (Butler, 1994; Fratzke, 1976; Hall, 1978; VeVerka, 1974; Vyverberg, 1976). Shim (1995) found that householders' clothing discard patterns were not necessarily related to their discard patterns for other materials such as metal, glass, or paper, or to their attitudes toward the environment. While disposal to landfill was the least favoured discard method by Edmonton area respondents, it did account for nearly 6% of their inventories. This finding may suggest that the complexity of consumer discard decisions may also apply within organizations. The fact that fifteen criteria were identified as important factors affecting organizational discards suggests that discarding clothing involves many factors which may not be related to concern for the environment or to discard attitudes and behaviours relating to other materials.

While literature suggested some businesses are changing to become more environmentally-conscious, this study found Edmonton respondents continue to use the same disposal strategies. Butler & Francis (1993) found that household practices relating to clothing discards have remained similar to those of 30 to 40 years ago. This study found that 84% of respondents have not changed or added

disposal options over the past five years. Whether this finding relates to a lack of new, more convenient options being introduced, or a lack of business incentives and/or technology for fiber recycling, is an issue for further research.

Finally, organizations indicate greatest needs for information in areas of marketing/sales and financial planning. Both areas relate not only to acquisitions or sources of secondhand clothing and distribution strategies, but also to discard methods. Issues such as channels or delivery methods, types of clothing, potential supply from households, current and potential levels of demand, advertising, pricing, and administrative procedures are all areas which require attention. As well, further research relating to acquisitions and discards of used clothing in other geographic areas will provide insights into improved efficiencies for the businesses and promote environmental and ethically-responsible disposal practices for both households and businesses.

Environmental and Ethical Implications

The second objective of this study was to identify and discuss environmental and ethical implications relating to the secondhand clothing trade. This study found that Edmonton area respondents discard or dispose of between 5% and 80% of their incoming inventories as waste or unwanted clothing. It also found that these textile wastes are disposed of in a number of ways: returns to consignors, donations to other organizations, exports by the organization, reprocessing by the organization, re-sale for export or reprocessing, disposal as landfill, and redistribution to other outlets or to staff. Based on the literature reviewed, the disposal methods used by Edmonton area respondents are examined in relation to their environmental and ethical implications.

Research suggested that the textile component of solid waste in rapidly-

filling landfills ranges from 3% to 5%. In Alberta, landfills received approximately 35,000 tonnes of textile waste in 1991 which comprised about 2.1% of the solid waste stream. Waste reduction, composting, and other forms of recycling are considered alternatives to landfill dumping. In addition to reducing the size of landfills, such alternatives may conserve energy, reduce land, air, and water pollution, and conserve manufacturing resources. Further, textiles which are recycleable have a relatively high economic value.

This study found that Edmonton arearespondents contribute to solid waste in amounts equalling approximately 6% of their inventories. It also found that these organizations have only moderate levels of understanding of the implications of disposal through landfill waste. While an option to discarding in landfills is further recycling, approximately one-third of Edmonton organizations report no knowledge of organizations which accept or purchase clothing discards for continued use as wearing apparel or for reprocessing or export. Finally, nearly half the discarded inventories of businesses are returned to households or circulated to other outlets. Where the clothing is next directed is a question for future research.

In considering the proportion of clothing discards directed to landfills by Edmonton area respondents and the potential value of textile waste, it may be useful to consider ways of salvaging this waste. Several strategies might be investigated. First, sources of the textile waste must be determined. Then stakeholders including families, businesses, environmental groups, and government agencies must be made aware of the long-term implications of directing textile waste to landfills. Third, stakeholders must be encouraged to explore disposal options and to modify disposal behaviours where appropriate.

Finally, incentives such as innovative collection and reprocessing methods must be initiated to change harmful disposal behaviours and facilitate greater recovery and reuse of textiles.

With respect to exports as a form of disposal, up to 16% of respondents' unwanted inventories are discarded this way. However, nearly half of the respondents indicate they have less than adequate knowledge of this method. Literature suggested there are a number of issues which arise from the export of secondhand clothing, both for exporting and importing nations. Some of these issues relate to the economic implications of the trade such as tariffs, employment, resources for secondary industries, and competition for related industries. Other issues relate to environmental impacts of landfill dumping or incineration of imported clothing in those nations, as well as the social and psychological aspects of western secondhand clothing which have become 'traditions' in less advantaged nations after many years of export trade.

Links between individuals and families, recyclers, environmental groups, and government agencies would assist all stakeholders to make informed, environmentally-conscious, and ethically-responsible decisions regarding the recycling of used clothing. Such information exchanges may also increase awareness regarding other discard options which involve the creative, economical, and socially-supportive potential of secondhand clothing, as well as reduce environmental costs and promote human well-being in the global community.

Organizational Differences

The third objective involved examining possible differences between commercial operations and charity organizations regarding policies and practices relating to secondhand clothing acquisition and discard. This investigation of a

population of secondhand clothing organizations, however, yielded data which could not be differentiated in this manner.

The questionnaire item designed to elicit this information asked organizations to rank the top three objectives of their organization from a number of options provided. As well, an open-ended option allowed respondents to identify other objectives. One option related to the generation of business profit, two included references to social objectives or social service, and one included employment and/or skills training, also considered to be socially-oriented.

While all participants responded to the item, the researcher considered that inconsistencies and discrepancies in the results made comparisons invalid. Several issues were considered. First, ranking among affiliated organizations did not match. For example, where one organization indicated profit was their primary objective, a related outlet selected a socially-oriented objective. This occurred in two organizational groupings.

Second, comments written on the survey form or made to the researcher at the time of pick-up did not match information provided in the questionnaire. In two cases, it appeared "primary goal" and/or "social objective/social service" required precise definition. In these cases, the comments "providing affordable clothing" and "aiding charities" were included by organizations who reported being socially-oriented but who were clearly profit-motivated agencies. Also, personal comments such as "we are not a secondhand store, we are a consignment company" and "ours is a business, not a charity" suggest related terminology carries connotions which are not acceptable to all operators, and this may have influenced survey responses.

A third situation involved two organizations ranking profit and social

objectives equally, which of course, did not allow the researcher to categorize the organizations. Finally, three organizations utilized the open-ended option, and indicated their primary objectives were: (1) to fund bibles for missions; (2) to educate public regarding recycling; and (3) related to personal satisfaction.

Such internal validity difficulties may be addressed in several ways. Possibly the item could have assumed a format which allowed only one response rather than ranking several options. Terms such as "primary goal", "profit" and "social" require clear definition or examples to avoid misunderstandings. As well, respondents must have the opportunity to classify "other" objectives according to the intended criteria of profit versus social objectives. Finally, additional questions in other formats could be included to confirm the validity of earlier responses and/or uncover new information.

There remains, however, the potential of biased responses relating to personal perceptions and interpretations of words, or actions of the respondents based on what they consider to be desired or expected responses. However, the reduction or alleviation of such threats to the validity of this item may yield information which could be analyzed in terms of differences. Distinctions among organizations based on primary objectives would provide insights into improving acquisition and discard practices as well as provide information to consumers whose discard decisions are critical to these organizations.

Marketing Implications

The final objective of the study was to identify market opportunities for surplus or unwanted secondhand clothing inventories. This section addresses opportunities identified by respondents in relation to those found in the literature.

Market Opportunities

Literature suggested that there are a number of options for the discard of unwanted secondhand clothing. Respondents confirm utilizing these discard practices which included returns to consignors, donations to other organizations, exports by the organization, reprocessing by the organization, re-sale for export or reprocessing, disposal as landfill waste, as well as redistributing clothing to other outlets or to staff.

Edmonton area respondents indicate, however, they do not understand all discard methods, and that most have not modified discard methods in the past five years. Literature suggested textile waste is a high value solid waste. Nearly 60% of respondents indicate inadequate knowledge of organizations which accept textile discards or purchase them, and over 40% of respondents had less than adequate knowledge of the implications of landfill waste. A directory of textile recycle organizations, along with preferred types of clothing and intended reuse, would be a useful tool for these organizations. Educational programs are needed in this area to convey existing alternatives and generate ideas for establishing other alternatives.

Organizations consider a number of organizational, administrative, and clothing-related factors when discarding unwanted inventories. While clothing-related factors were generally less important, the single most important factor was condition of the clothing. Further, while soiled and/or damaged apparel was rejected by nearly all organizations, the style, type, and quality were also major considerations. These findings may assist organizations to refine acquisition practices or expediently re-route unacceptable garments which may save them processing time and/or storage space, also key factors in discard practices.

Inventory Control. Other marketing implications relate to respondents'

difficulty in reporting annual volume of inventory. This study found reported monthly fluctuations in amounts of clothing acquisitions which ranged from 2.5% to 75.0% of inventories per month. As well, 22% of organizations have no formalized inventory tracking system. Organizations must have marketing systems which enable them to attract the desired volume and quality of inventory at predictable times, implement advertising and sales strategies which complement their acquisition practices, and discard unwanted merchandise in convenient, economical, and socially-conscious ways.

Research indicated that household discard practices are directly related to potential secondhand inventories. Accordingly, secondhand organizations might address inventory control in several ways: (1) by understanding/predicting household discard patterns and adjusting solicitation, advertising, and sales strategies at optimal times; and (2) by implementing or upgrading inventory tracking systems which address this critical component of their operations.

Clothing Types. The literature suggested that secondhand clothing historically has included various types which enhance the well-being of a diverse group of clientele. Recent literature also suggested that secondhand organizations process more women's clothing than any other type. This study supported the literature in that various types of clothing are reported in Edmonton outlets including men's, women's, children's, unisex, casual, formal, and specialty. It also confirmed that women's clothing is the predominate type carried by Edmonton respondents. When these findings are considered in light of the relatively low number of years of operation as well as the number of recent closures, perhaps there is an excess supply of certain types of clothing. If such is the case, perhaps operators, in order to be competitive, must research markets very carefully before

determining what type(s) of clothing to carry. A knowledge of existing outlets and their inventory types, as well as demographic, socio-economic, and lifestyle data may assist operators to establish and/or maintain viable long-term secondhand clothing businesses.

Advertising. Other marketing implications of this study relate to advertising. Fourteen methods of advertising were identified. While most organizations use a combination of methods, it may be useful to examine results of each method independently as well as in combinations in order to analyze cost-benefit relationships among the methods.

Recycling Initiatives. Secondhand clothing organizations must become involved in initiating reprocessing or other forms of recycling. Infrastructures and technologies which support recycling must be developed with input from these organizations. Such initiatives are critical to the economic, environmental, and social well-being of all stakeholders.

In summary, existing operators and those considering entering the business will benefit by gathering and/or sharing information in areas of inventory management systems, acquisition procedures, distribution strategies, and discard practices. Organizations must also consider adapting current procedures and implementing alternatives to address changing environments rather than continuing with past practices.

Chapter VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides a summary of the study and includes its purposes, the literature reviewed, the conceptual framework, and the research method. Findings are summarized as they relate to objectives of the study and are followed by conclusions and recommendations for action and/or further research.

Summary

The main purpose of the study was to develop a profile of secondhand clothing organizations which included acquisition and discard practices, and to examine economic, environmental, and ethical issues relating to those practices. Other objectives were to examine profile differences between commercial and charity organizations and to identify market opportunities for surplus or unwanted secondhand clothing inventories.

The literature review covered three main areas: clothing consumption trends, the secondhand clothing trade, and the economic, environmental, and ethical issues relating to acquisition and discard practices. Consumption trends in the clothing industry were related to individual, family, and external environmental variables. Literature relating to the secondhand clothing trade included an overview of the historic significance of secondhand clothing in Europe since the 1550s, the development of the secondhand clothing trade in North America since the turn of the century, and an overview of the industry as it exists today. Environmental issues pertaining to the secondhand clothing trade were discussed as they relate to reducing textile waste in landfills and reprocessing fibers and fabrics as a way of conserving raw materials and energy. Solicitation practices of secondhand clothing organizations and the long-term economic and

environmental effects of the international trade in used clothing were among the ethical issues examined.

The conceptual framework for the study was based on Kilsdonk's (1983) model of The Family and Its Near Environment Related to the Various Dimensions of the Total Human Environment. The specific Human Ecosystem Model developed for this study addressed relationships between an individual, clothing as part of the near environment, and various other levels and components of the environment affected by clothing. The model offered a comprehensive framework for analyzing economic, environmental, and ethical issues relating to the secondhand clothing trade, and incorporated the global interdependence of individuals and their environments for the purpose of making appropriate decisions in support of an improved quality of life and well-being.

Following a pilot study outside the population area, questionnaires which addressed general characteristics of the organization, clothing acquisition, and discard practices were distributed to 63 organizations in the Edmonton area. Fifty responses (79%) were returned, and a profile was developed by organizing and summarizing data through descriptive statistics.

Organizational Profile

The first objective of the study was to develop a profile of secondhand clothing organizations which included acquisition and discard practices. The majority of respondents were commercial or profit-oriented organizations, with the remainder identifying a variety of socially-oriented objectives such as creating employment or skills training, providing revenue for other social services, and providing clothing to the needy as their primary organizational goal. Physical characteristics were described in terms of size and location of the outlets;

operational strategies were analyzed in relation to inventory systems, advertising, methods of payment, and hours of operation; and other general characteristics included affiliations with other organizations, number of years in business, tenancy arrangements, and legal structure. Approximately 600 workers were profiled based on status, qualifications, training, and duties. Respondents also ranked perceived organizational needs and indicated that marketing/sales and financial planning were priority isssues.

With regard to acquisition practices, respondents indicated that more than half of their secondhand clothing inventories are obtained through consignments. The balance come from donations, purchases from Canadian sources, and imports. Methods of soliciting, collecting, processing, pricing, and advertising the clothing were described. Quantities of clothing were analyzed by type, by annual volume processed, by typical delivery quantity, and by peak months for acquisitions.

A large proportion of used clothing is discarded either at the time of initial inspection or at some later time after it has been removed from active inventory. More than one-quarter of clothing which is received by respondents is rejected on initial inspection, most often because of its condition. Of that which is accepted and processed as active inventory, an additional 25% which is not distributed or sold is later removed and discarded based on a number of organizational, administrative, and clothing-related factors. Edmonton respondents identified a number of discard methods including returns to consignors, donations to other organizations, reprocessing, exporting, re-sale for export or reprocessing, landfill, and redistribution to other outlets or staff. Discards were analyzed in terms of peak months as well as past and future trends relating to volume.

Environmental and Ethical Implications

The second objective of the study was to identify and discuss environmental and ethical implications relating to acquisition and discard practices. Previous research suggested suppliers of secondhand clothing, often households, make decisions about allocating unwanted used clothing based on information which may be limited or outdated, and in fact, they are occasionally misled by solicitors. This study found organizations also dispose of waste clothing based on limited and possibly outdated information.

While policy makers encourage reductions of landfill waste to conserve natural resources, reduce landfill costs, and protect the air, water, and soil from toxic contamination, the amount, type, and source of textile waste which enters landfills is not clear. Textile waste entering Alberta landfills is estimated to comprise 2.1% of the total waste stream. Data from this study indicates that Edmonton respondents discard nearly 6% of unwanted inventories to landfills. In addition, over one-quarter of discards are returned to consigners and possibly some of these discards are also directed to landfills. As well, most respondents do not change or adapt discard practices frequently and many do not fully understand the implications of discard methods. While literature suggested businesses appear receptive to recycling and reprocessing, it would appear there are limited policy and marketing initiatives to promote these strategies as they relate to textile waste in this area.

While exporting used clothing may offer disposal solutions to local agencies, the broader effects of exports on importing nations are not clear, and in fact, occasionally would appear short-sighted and naive. Clothing exported from North America generates revenue and supports our balance of payments while diverting textile waste from landfills. For the importing nation, it satisfies

consumer needs, creates employment, and provides resources for secondary industries.

Despite the advantages, exports of used clothing have also been criticized. They are said to negatively affect developing economies by providing unfair competition for those local textile industries and depriving governments of tariff revenue from exports of new fabrics and garments. As well, because much of the supply comes from charity organizations which acquire donated clothing, intermediaries are accused of misleading donors and generating economic revenue from actions which were intended to be charitable. Clearly, acquisition and discard practices in the secondhand clothing trade involve not just economic considerations, but environmental and ethical issues as well. Further, these issues must be analyzed from the perspectives of both near and global environments.

Profile Differences Between Charity and Commercial Organizations

The third objective of the study was to examine possible profile differences between commercial operators and charity organizations regarding policies and practices relating to secondhand clothing acquisition and discard. While the study was not successful in differentiating practices based on organizational type, it did provide an overall profile of the respondents which described their characteristics, objectives, and policies and practices relating to acquiring and disposing of clothing inventories. Further research is required which addresses differences among organizations involved in the secondhand clothing trade or in-depth information related to any specific aspect of their operations. This information will assist organizations to refine acquisition and discard practices as they relate to specific organizational objectives and it will aid consumers to make more informed discard decisions.

Marketing Implications

The final objective of the study was to identify market opportunities for surplus or unwanted secondhand clothing. Just as consumption includes all phases of the acquisition-use-discard cycle, marketing processes in secondhand clothing organizations also include similar phases of acquistion, processing, and discard.

The majority of clothing in respondents' outlets is acquired through consignments and the majority of discards are through returns to consigners. Other sources of acquistion include donations, purchases, and imports. Literature suggested a number of recycling opportunities for unwanted secondhand clothing which fall into two basic categories: (a) distribution for same uses as wearing apparel; or (b) reprocessing fabric or fiber for new uses. Many Edmonton respondents are involved in these methods of reprocessing by donating to other organizations, exporting, making wipe rags, selling to intermediaries who reprocess or export, and by exchanging with staff or other outlets. However, 6% of respondents' discards are directed as solid waste to landfills.

The variety of acquisition and discard practices used by Edmonton respondents offer many alternatives for organizations which have not considered the broad implications of their current practices and/or changed discard practices. These include the potential for charity organizations to generate revenue, employment, or training programs through consignment sales; the ability for consignment operators to encourage clients to redirect unwanted clothing to other organizations; and the opportunity for both commercial and charity organizations to reduce landfill waste and take advantage of the high value of textile waste by recycling and reprocessing.

This study addressed a number of other marketing-related activities.

Solicitations, collection methods, garment processing, advertising, and pricing strategies are areas in which information exchanges can promote improvements which satisfy organizational objectives, promote discard to recyclers rather than to landfill, as well as reduce or alleviate public criticism regarding solicitation messages. Findings from this study provide alternatives in marketing strategies which could address needs indicated by respondents. They could also facilitate improvements in acquisition and discard practices associated with changes in clothing trends, demographics, social and lifestyle influences, and environmental awareness.

Conclusions and Implications

The trade in secondhand clothing is more than passing along outgrown winter coats or outdated business suits; it is more than volunteers doing charity fundraising; it is more than cutting wiperags and patchwork pieces from scraps of worn garments. Recycling clothing has become big business.

This study confirmed that the Edmonton area secondhand clothing trade is big business in terms of the volume of secondhand clothing which is acquired, the number of consumers who appreciate its economic advantage, the number of workers it employs, and its network of distribution channels to end users. It is significant in terms of international trade, legal and licensing fees, and leasing contracts for physical space. The trade also provides resources for some reprocessing activities and for educational recycling projects.

While the economic implications are significant, areas for improvement are noted. The short longevity and/or high turnover suggests many organizations require marketing assistance, a finding Edmonton respondents confirmed. Large

quantities of unwanted inventories are returned to consigners and/or sent to landfills. This practice represents an economic loss as well as environmental cost. Difficulties in estimating volumes of clothing represent a lack of administrative ability to predict and manage inventory flow, a finding confirmed by the comparison of monthly acquisitions and discards. The one organization involved in importing secondhand clothing handles specialty uniforms; potential markets may exist for other types of specialty or unique clothing.

Economics are not the only indicator of the importance of the secondhand clothing trade in Edmonton. It satisfies needs of a great number and variety of purchasers whose social and lifestyle preferences are met by this product. Recycling clothing reduces the amount of textile waste which is incinerated or sent to landfills. Environmentalism is a concept which householders and business operators embrace, and the trade in secondhand clothing allows both to include textiles in environmentally-conscious recycle programs.

Based on findings of this study, environmental issues must be addressed. Nearly 6% of inventories are discarded to landfills. More than half of unwanted inventories is returned to consigners, and possibly much of this clothing is also directed to landfills. This discard method represents an economic loss in view of the high value of waste textiles which could be sold or reprocessed and the energy conserved in textile reprocessing as opposed to manufacturing new textiles. It also represents environmental cost in view of air, water, and soil contamination from landfill sites.

The trade in secondhand clothing has other implications which warrant ethical consideration. Textile recycling practices which appear economical and environmentally responsible in one location may have an opposite long-term effect

in another area. While secondhand clothing exports appear to offer an environmentally-acceptable and economically-attractive alternative to landfill dumping in North America, they are accused of creating economies of dependencies on western products, fuelling unfair advantages which destory local textile industries, and transferring landfill problems to third world nations. While these exports also create employment, provide training, and offer affordable products to less advantaged nations, intermediaries are accused of profiting from North American philanthrophy. Such issues are significant and complex and must be addressed from a broad ecological perspective where environments are interdependent and where interactions occur constantly and in random order to affect human quality of life and global well-being.

Recommendations

This research appears to be the among the first to examine the secondhand clothing trade as it relates to the multiple levels and components of the environment. Due to the exploratory nature of the study many concerns were left unanswered. Several questions are therefore presented, with suggestions for action and/or future research within interrelated business, policy, and consumer environments.

Consumer Environments

1. Who are the consumers of secondhand clothing and what are their needs? Organizations can gather much information from clients through questionnaires distributed in outlets or during informal interviews. This information can be analyzed to more effectively target markets with promotional and sales strategies as well as to identify trends. Clothing consumption research which extends beyond the secondhand outlet clients would enhance this marketing information.

2. How do consumer discard habits affect the trade? What do consignees do with secondhand clothing which is rejected by consignment organizations? Secondhand organizations can elicit information from clients with respect to discards. They also can offer advice and set examples regarding recycling. Discard information would enable operators to motivate or complement clients' discards behaviour and would assist clients to make informed disposal decisions. Formal research is required to analyze household discards with respect to types and quanities of clothing discarded, motivations for discard, and timing/frequency of discards.

Business Environments

1. What options exist for the disposal of unwanted secondhand clothing? A local directory should be compiled which lists and describes recyclers of secondhand clothing. This directory should identify the organizations, their primary goals, and the intended use of the clothing. This information should be available to both businesses and households, including consignees whose clothing is not accepted in particular secondhand clothing outlets, to make them more aware of environmentally responsible disposal options.

2. How can marketing systems and financial planning in secondhand clothing organizations be improved? Respondents have indicated a need for further information in these areas. Linkages among secondhand clothing organizations, both commercial and charity, policy agencies, and the general public at conferences or public forums are needed to promote the trade in mutually acceptable ways. Marketing systems, including inventory control, are areas with potential for significant improvement.

3. Do secondhand clothing outlets compete with, complement, or merely

coexist with traditional sources of new clothing? While trends in clothing consumption have been explored, updates which are localized are required to determine relationships between new and used clothing consumption. This information will be particularly important to secondhand clothing organizations in analyzing competition and acquiring clothing inventory.

4. Can fashion designers include secondhand clothing? Uses for recycled clothing must be integrated into formal study programs to provide opportunities for economic, socially-supportive, and environmentally-conscious design projects. By including clothing in creative venues for students and entrepreneurs, recycling behaviours for a large number of people can be expanded to include textiles.

5. How do secondhand clothing organizations differ? While many economic, environmental, and ethical issues are common to all organizations, further study is needed to categorize characteristics and practices of secondhand clothing organizations based on organizational objectives. This may be accomplished by designing questions which clarify definitions of key concepts and by formatting a number of questions which confirm the validity of the item.

Policy Environments

1. How much used clothing is sent to landfills? Individual operators must consciously monitor textile waste being sent to landfills and establish immediate reduction/elimination goals. Policy makers must clarify the amount and type of textile waste entering landfills, establish industry-related criteria for reductions, and provide disposal alternatives for households and businesses. Research is required into the reprocessing of fabrics and fibers and composting textile waste in order that they can be developed as alternatives to landfill waste.

2. Is reprocessing a disposal option for local businesses? Information must

be provided on organizations which purchase or accept discards for reprocessing or export. As well, infrastructures and manufacturing industries must be established to encourage environmentally-conscious disposal methods which keep textile waste from entering landfills. Collaborative efforts between charity and commercial reprocessors and other agencies must be explored. In this way, textiles can become part of the recycling philosophy of households and businesses, markets for textile salvage can be established, and landfills are spared waste.

3. What are the issues relating to exports of our used clothing? Research is needed into broad economic, environmental, and ethical issues relating to the international trade of used clothing. Donors and agencies involved in exporting used clothing must be informed of formal laws as well as informal procedures which affect individuals, businesses, environmental and policy groups in the global community in order that all stakeholders can make informed decisions regarding textile disposal.

Secondhand clothing historically has been associated with charity recipients. While there is limited formal research regarding the secondhand clothing trade, there is currently a great deal of media and consumer interest in the phenomenon. Findings from this study confirmed the economic significance of the trade and found that it is not primarly charity based, but that it is commerical or profit-oriented. The study also addressed the significant environmental and ethical implications which confirm the trade cannot be appraised in economic terms alone. Perhaps from research such as this, the secondhand clothing trade can be further developed in ways that promote human well-being and environmental conservation in the global community.

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APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Secondhand Clothing Operator:

I am a graduate student in the Department of Human Ecology at the University of Alberta currently working on a Master's thesis relating to secondhand clothing organizations. The objectives of this research are threefold: (A) to identify policies and practices relating to acquisition of secondhand clothing; (B) to identify policies and practices relating to disposal or discard of unwanted inventories; and (C) to develop a profile of secondhand clothing organizations in the City of Edmonton and surrounding trade area.

The attached questionnaire has been developed for the purpose of this research. Information relating to this study will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. While participation is completely voluntary, your contribution would be extremely helpful. You may refrain from answering specific questions if you choose. The questionnaire should take 30-45 minutes to complete, and I am available to assist you with any aspect of the questionnaire which you may wish to discuss. As well, I would be pleased to share a summary of the results when the research is complete. You may indicate your desire for such a summary on the final page of the questionnaire, or telephone me at (403) 492-5997, or fax (403) 492-4821.

The questionnaire will be picked up from your organization in approximately one week. Your cooperation in contributing to this valuable community research is gratefully appreciated.

Yours truly,

Kay Kathan McFadyen, BEd
MSc Candidate

SECONDHAND CLOTHING ORGANIZATIONS:

PROFILE, POLICIES & PRACTICES

A Survey of Edmonton Area Organizations

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1995

SECONDHAND CLOTHING ORGANIZATIONS: PROFILE, POLICIES & PRACTICES

==========

This questionnaire is divided into three sections: (A) Acquistion of Secondhand Clothing; (B) Discard of Unwanted Inventories; (C) Profile of Organization. Each section contains a number of questions or statements. ***Please check the item(s) which best answers the question or completes the statement, or fill in the blank(s) where appropriate.***

==========

A. POLICIES & PRACTICES RELATING TO ACQUISITION OF SECONDHAND CLOTHING:

1. How does your organization acquire secondhand clothing? (Estimate the PERCENTAGE of each method which applies, leaving blank any which do not apply, with total = 100%.)

___% Donations
___% Consignments
___% Purchases - Canadian sources
___% Imports from other countries
___% Other: Please specify _____

2. By what methods does your organization solicit secondhand clothing? (Check ALL that apply.)

( ) Word of mouth
( ) Newsletters or flyers
( ) Disposal bins or drop-off depots
( ) Newspaper advertising
( ) Telephone solicitation
( ) Other: Please specify _____

3. How is secondhand clothing delivered to your organization? (Estimate the PERCENTAGE of each method which applies, leaving blank any which do not apply, with total = 100%.)

___% Residential pick-up
___% Central drop-off location
___% Delivery to our premises
___% Other: Please specify _____

4. What types of secondhand clothing does your organization carry? (Estimate PERCENTAGE of each, with total = 100%.)

___% Ladies' casual & business wear
___% Ladies' specialty (eg. bridal, formal, maternity)
___% Men's casual & business wear
___% Men's specialty (eg. formal)
___% Unisex clothing
___% Children's clothing
___% Other: Please specify _____

5. Approximately how many articles of secondhand clothing are received per year? (Indicate number of items or weight.)

Number of Articles _____
OR Weight of articles _____ lb. (or _____ kilo.)

6. Does the quantity/weight of donations fluctuate throughout the year? If so, what are the peak months of the year for highest donations?

___ Donations are approximately equal each month
OR Peak months are: (CIRCLE the peak months.)

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

7. How many articles of clothing are typically acquired (donated/consigned/purchased) from one person/household at a time? (Estimate PERCENTAGES, with total = 100%.)

___% Less than 12 items
___% 13 - 24 items
___% 25 - 50 items
___% Other: Please specify _____

8. What types of clothing are not accepted or are immediately discarded by your organization? (Check ALL that apply.)

___ Out-of-season apparel
___ Out-of-style or unfashionable apparel
___ Lower quality apparel/unknown label or designer
___ Soiled and/or damaged apparel
___ Type of apparel not generally handled by our organization (ie. casual versus formal)
___ Other: Please specify _____

9. What proportion of clothing is declined or rejected on initial inspection? (Circle the closest PERCENTAGE or RANGE.)

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50% Other ___%

10. How are secondhand clothes which are accepted for inventory processed before they are displayed or distributed? (Check ALL that apply.)

( ) Dry cleaning
( ) Laundering
( ) Spot cleaning
( ) Pressing or steaming
( ) Mending
( ) No processing, displayed "as is"
( ) Other: Please specify _____

11. Who establishes the retail selling prices of your secondhand clothing?

( ) Management/employees of the organization
( ) Donor/management consultation
( ) Donor alone
( ) Other: Please specify _____

12. What are the three most important factors you consider in establishing retail prices for secondhand clothing? (Please RANK the factors in numerical order with 1=most important, 2=second most important, and 3=third most important.)

___ Comparisons with other secondhand organizations
___ Comparisons with cost of new clothing
___ Availability or supply of inventory
___ Negotiations with consignors
___ Customer demand for specific items
___ Covering costs
___ Profit maximization
___ Condition of garment
___ Customer need/resources
___ Other: Please specify _____

B. POLICIES & PRACTICES RELATING TO DISCARD OF UNWANTED INVENTORIES OF SECONDHAND CLOTHING:

In the following section, "Discard" is used interchangeably with "Disposal" and refers to any removal of clothing from inventory, whether for recycling or reuse, or as unuseable waste.

1. What discard method(s) do you presently use? (Estimate PERCENTAGE for each method used, with total = 100%.)

___% Return to consigner/donor/original owner
___% Donation to another party or organization (eg. museum, theatre, charity)
___% Waste disposal to landfill
___% Reprocessed by our organization (eg. wiperags)
___% Exported by our organization to other countries
___% Sold for reprocessing or export
___% Other: Please specify _____

2. Have your discard method(s) changed, or have you included new method(s), in the past five years? Yes ___ No _____

3. Which discard method(s) do you feel you currently understand? (For **each** of the following methods, CIRCLE your level of understanding, with 1=Fully Understand, 3=Adequate Understanding, 5=No Knowledge.)

	Fully Understood		Adequate Understanding		No Knowledge
Consignments	1	2	3	4	5
Organizations which accept donated discards	1	2	3	4	5
Organizations which purchase discards for reprocessing or export	1	2	3	4	5
Waste disposal in landfills or by incineration	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

4. What factors influence your inventory discard method(s) for unwanted secondhand clothing? (Please RATE each of the following, with 1=most important, 3=somewhat important, 5=not important.)

		Most Important		Somewhat Important		Not Important
ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS:						
(a)	Assisting other organizations	1	2	3	4	5
(b)	Protecting the environment	1	2	3	4	5
(c)	Fulfilling legal obligations	1	2	3	4	5
(d)	Maximizing profit/financial gain	1	2	3	4	5
ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATIONS:						
(e)	Maintaining lowest cost	1	2	3	4	5
(f)	Convenience/expediency	1	2	3	4	5
(g)	Storage capacity to hold stock	1	2	3	4	5
(h)	Excessive time in inventory	1	2	3	4	5
(i)	Number of pricing markdowns	1	2	3	4	5
CLOTHING RELATED FACTORS:						
(j)	Out-of-season apparel	1	2	3	4	5
(k)	Out-of-style apparel	1	2	3	4	5
(l)	Fiber content of apparel	1	2	3	4	5
(m)	Lower quality/unknown label	1	2	3	4	5
(n)	General condition (soiled, damaged)	1	2	3	4	5
OTHER: _____		1	2	3	4	5

5. What is the single most important factor in determining your discard method(s)? (Fill the blank with the LETTER from B-4 which corresponds with your selection.) _____

6. What is your policy regarding the length of time secondhand clothing is retained in inventory prior to discard?

( ) No specific policy regarding retention period
( ) Policy is to keep clothing for ____ months only
( ) Other: Please specify _____

7. What is your policy regarding markdowns for secondhand clothing prior to discard?

( ) No formalized markdown policy
( ) Policy specifies single pricing; no markdowns
( ) Policy specifies maximum of ___ markdowns
( ) Other: Please specify _____

8. Approximately what percentage of secondhand clothing inventory is eventually discarded as unwanted inventory or unsold merchandise? (Circle the PERCENTAGE or RANGE.)

0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50% Other ___%

9. Does the amount of clothing which is discarded fluctuate throughout the year? If so, what are the peak months of the year for the highest number of discards?

___ Discards are approximately equal each month
-OR- Peak months are: (CIRCLE the peak months.)
Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

10. What trends can you identify regarding the percentage of secondhand clothing which was discarded **over the past five years**? (CIRCLE the appropriate number where 1=more was discarded, 3=no change in amount of discards, 5=less was discarded.)

	More was Discarded		Amount Unchanged		Less was Discarded
Past trends	1	2	3	4	5

11. What trends do you foresee regarding the percentage of secondhand clothing which is discarded **in the coming five years**?

	More will be Discarded		Amount Unchanged		Less will be Discarded
Future trends	1	2	3	4	5

C. PROFILE OF ORGANIZATION:

1. What are the primary goals or objectives of your organization as related to secondhand clothing? (Please **RANK** the top three goals numerically, with 1=most important, 2=second most important, 3=third most important.)

___ Generating business profit
___ Generating revenue for other social objectives
___ Providing a social service in the form of clothing
___ Providing employment and/or skills training
___ Other: _____

2. How many secondhand clothing retail outlets does your organization operate in the City of Edmonton and surrounding trade area (Fort Saskatchewan, St. Albert, Spruce Grove, Sherwood Park, Leduc, and Wetaskiwin)?

_____ Outlets in Edmonton area

3. How many other secondhand clothing outlets does your organization operate in Alberta?

_____ Outlets in Alberta

4. How many other secondhand clothing outlets does your organization operate in Canada?

_____ Outlets in Canada

5. How many secondhand clothing outlets does your organization operate in North America?

_____ Outlets in North America

6. When was this Edmonton area outlet established? (Give **DAY/MONTH/YEAR**).

DD_____/MO_____/YR_____

7. What is the physical size of this secondhand clothing outlet?

_____ square feet,
OR _____ square meters

8. Please indicate your tenancy arrangement in these premises.
   ( ) Private ownership
   ( ) Rent/Lease from a parent organization
   ( ) Rent/Lease from an unrelated organization
   ( ) Donated space
   ( ) Other: Please specify _____

9. Please describe the ownership of your secondhand clothing organization.
   ( ) Informal, unlicensed
   ( ) Sole proprietorship
   ( ) Partnership
   ( ) Corporation
   ( ) Franchise
   ( ) Non-profit charity
   ( ) Other: Please specify _____

10. How many employees normally work **full-time** in this outlet?
    _____ Employees

11. How many employees normally work **part-time** in this outlet?
    _____ Employees

12. How many **volunteers** normally work in this outlet?
    _____ Volunteers

13. What education/training/experience is preferred for these workers? (Check ALL that apply under **each** of the three worker categories.)

	Full-Time	Part-Time	Volunteer
No qualifications specified	_____	_____	_____
High School Education	_____	_____	_____
Post Secondary Education	_____	_____	_____
Formal Retail Training	_____	_____	_____
General Retail Experience	_____	_____	_____
Experience with the organization in other capacities	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

14. What training is provided to new employees and volunteers? (Check ALL that apply under each of the three worker categories.)

	Full-Time	Part-Time	Volunteer
Evaluate/Accept Inventory	_____	_____	_____
Sort, Repair, Clean Inventory	_____	_____	_____
Display Merchandise	_____	_____	_____
Regular Pricing	_____	_____	_____
Discounting, Markdowns, Sales	_____	_____	_____
Retail Sales/Customer Relations	_____	_____	_____
Clerical /Administration	_____	_____	_____
Discard Unwanted Inventories	_____	_____	_____
Other: _____	_____	_____	_____

15. What mechanism(s) is used for tracking inventory? (Check ALL that apply.)

( ) Computers
( ) Manual recordkeeping
( ) Garment tag information
( ) No formalized procedure
( ) Other: Please specify _____

16. In which of the following areas do you feel it would be useful to have additional business information? (CIRCLE the degree of need for each area below, with 1=most needed, 3=somewhat needed, 5=not needed.)

	Most Needed		Somewhat Needed		Not Needed
Routine Record Keeping	1	2	3	4	5
Financial Planning	1	2	3	4	5
Insurance, Licenses, Taxation	1	2	3	4	5
Marketing/Sales Planning	1	2	3	4	5
Inventory Acquisition Procedures	1	2	3	4	5
Inventory Discard Procedures	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	1	2	3	4	5

17. What types of payment do you accept for secondhand clothing purchases? (Check ALL that apply.)

( ) Cash only
( ) Cheques
( ) Major credit cards
( ) Direct debit card
( ) Layaway or installment plans
( ) Other: Please specify _____

18. What forms of sales advertising do you use? (Check ALL that apply.)

( ) Word of mouth
( ) Flyers/Posters
( ) Business cards
( ) Mailing lists
( ) Newspaper advertising
( ) Yellow pages advertising
( ) Radio/TV
( ) Other: Please specify _____

19. What is the AVERAGE number of hours your outlet remains open for retail business each week?

( ) up to 19 hours per week
( ) 20-40 hours per week
( ) 41-60 hours per week
( ) 61-72 hours per week
( ) more than 72 hours per week

20. Is the senior administrator within your outlet male or female?

___ Male ___ Female

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Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire. Your contribution to this community research is extremely useful and your assistance is gratefully appreciated.

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ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

1. If you had any problems in interpreting the questionnaire, please note them below (or on next page).

2. If you have any additional comments relating to the questionnaire or this research, please note them below (or on next page).

3. Would you like a follow-up appointment to discuss the questionnaire or other issues pertaining to this research? If so, please indicate below and briefly describe the issue(s) you wish to discuss. *Yes* _____ *No* _____
Issue:

4. Should the researcher consider a meeting beneficial, would you be willing to further discuss your responses to the questionnaire or other issues pertaining to this research?
Yes _____ *No* _____

5. While the contents of the questionnaires are confidential, a summary of results will be made available. If you are interested in receiving a summary, please indicate here.
Yes _____ *No* _____

If <u>Yes</u> to #3, #4 or #5 above, please complete the following:

Name of Organization: _____
Attention: _____
Address: _____
_____
Telephone: _____

If you have any questions, please contact:

Kay McFadyen, Designated Researcher
University of Alberta
Telephone: 403/492-5997

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT: Secondhand Clothing Organizations: Profile, Practices and Procedures

INVESTIGATOR:

Kay K. McFadyen, MSc Candidate
University of Alberta, Edmonton
Telephone: 403/492-5997

RESEARCH INFORMATION:

The purpose of the questionnaire is to obtain information on secondhand clothing organizations relating to three main areas:

(1) profile secondhand clothing organizations in the City of Edmonton and surrounding trade area;
(2) identify policies and practices relating to acquistion of secondhand clothing;
(3) identify policies and practices relating to discard of unwanted inventories.

Completion of the questionnaire should take approximately 30-45 minutes. Any questions may be referred to the researcher at the above address or telephone number.

Participation in the research project is strictly voluntary, and candidates may withdraw at any time. Identity of participants will be kept confidential by the researcher by coding all responses for computer entry, and by destroying all responses after the results are analyzed. A summary of the results is available to participants if they wish to receive one.

CONSENT OF PARTICIPANT:

I acknowledge that the research procedures described above, of which I have a copy, have been explained to me, and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. In addition, I know that I may contact the person designated on this form if I have further questions either now or in the future. I have been informed of the alternatives to participation in this study. I understand the possible benefits of joining the research study, as well as the possible risks and discomforts. I have been assured that personal records relating to this study will be kept confidential. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without jeopardy to myself. I understand that if any knowledge gained from the study is forthcoming that could influence my decision to continue in this study, I will be promptly informed.

_____
Name of Participant (printed)

_____ _____
Signature of Witness Signature of Participant

_____ _____
Date Date

_____
For further information, please contact: Kay K. McFadyen, Designated Researcher